BUBBLEGUM CRISIS

GRAND MAL

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BUBBLEGUM CRISIS
GRAND MAL

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BUBBLEGUM CRISIS™: GRAND MAL

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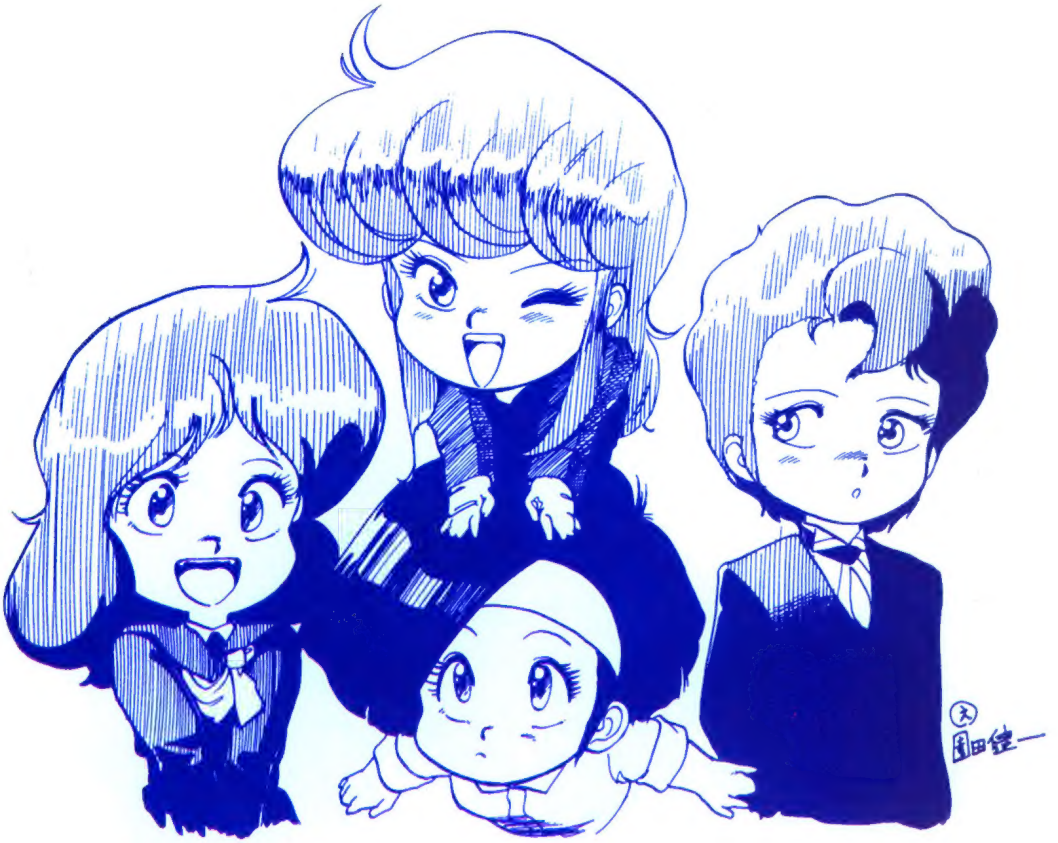


Adam's slow and steady efforts at drawing otaku*-type manga have once again borne fruit! Although Bubblegum Crisis is just a fond memory to me now, it gives me great pleasure to see the characters I designed make their appearance in America.

Good job, Adam!
Keep on drawing!
I'm behind you all the way!

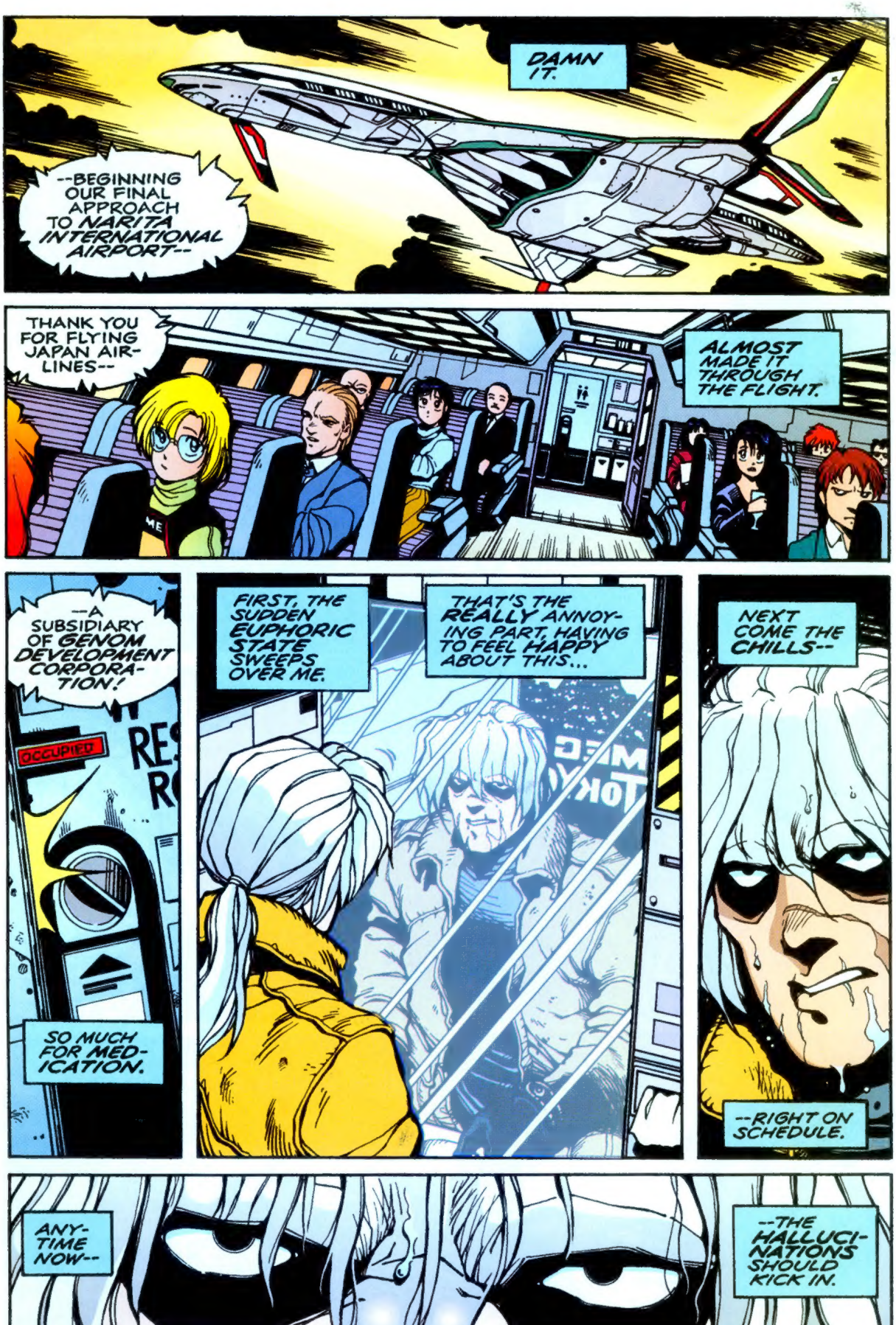
*dedicated fan

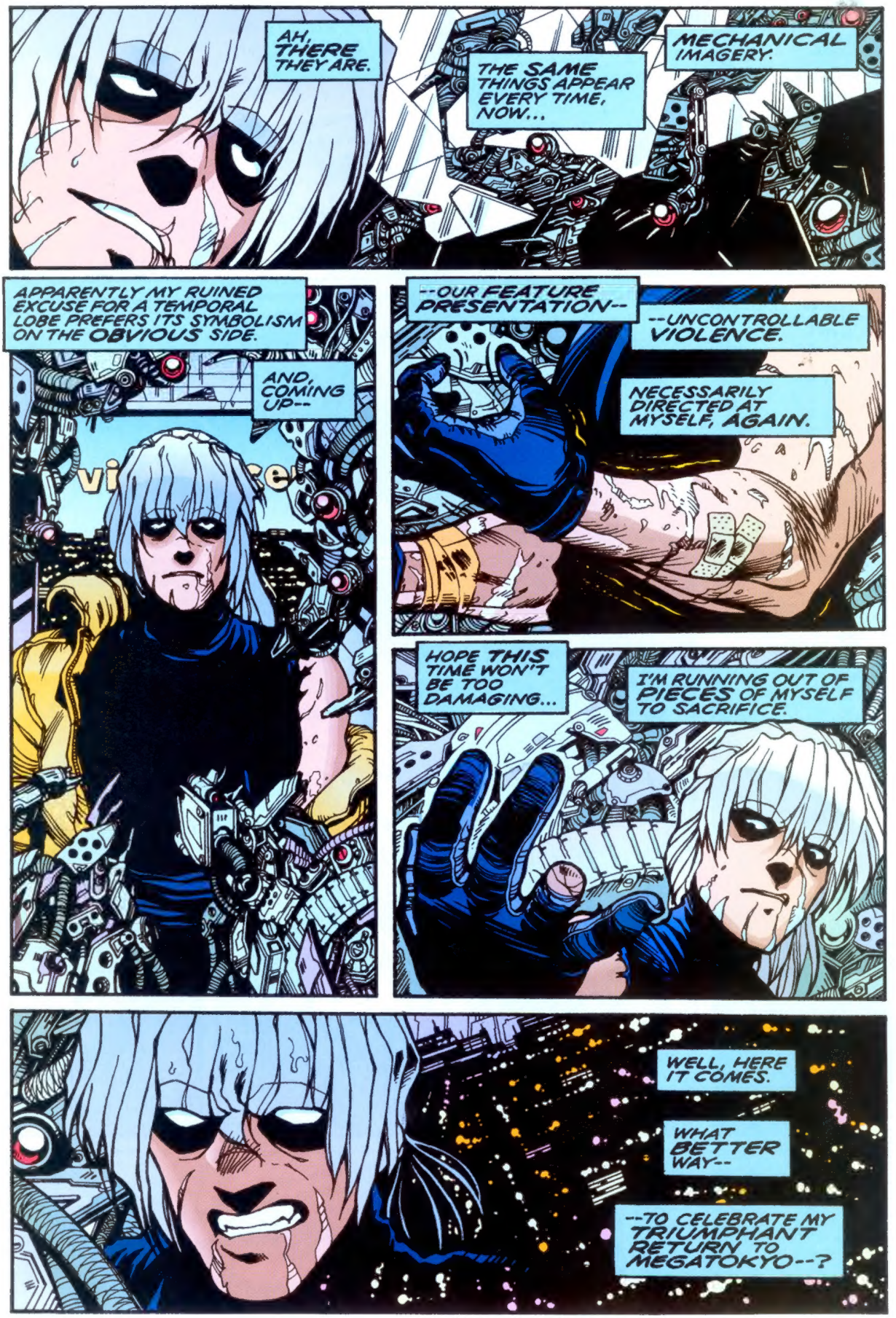
園田健一

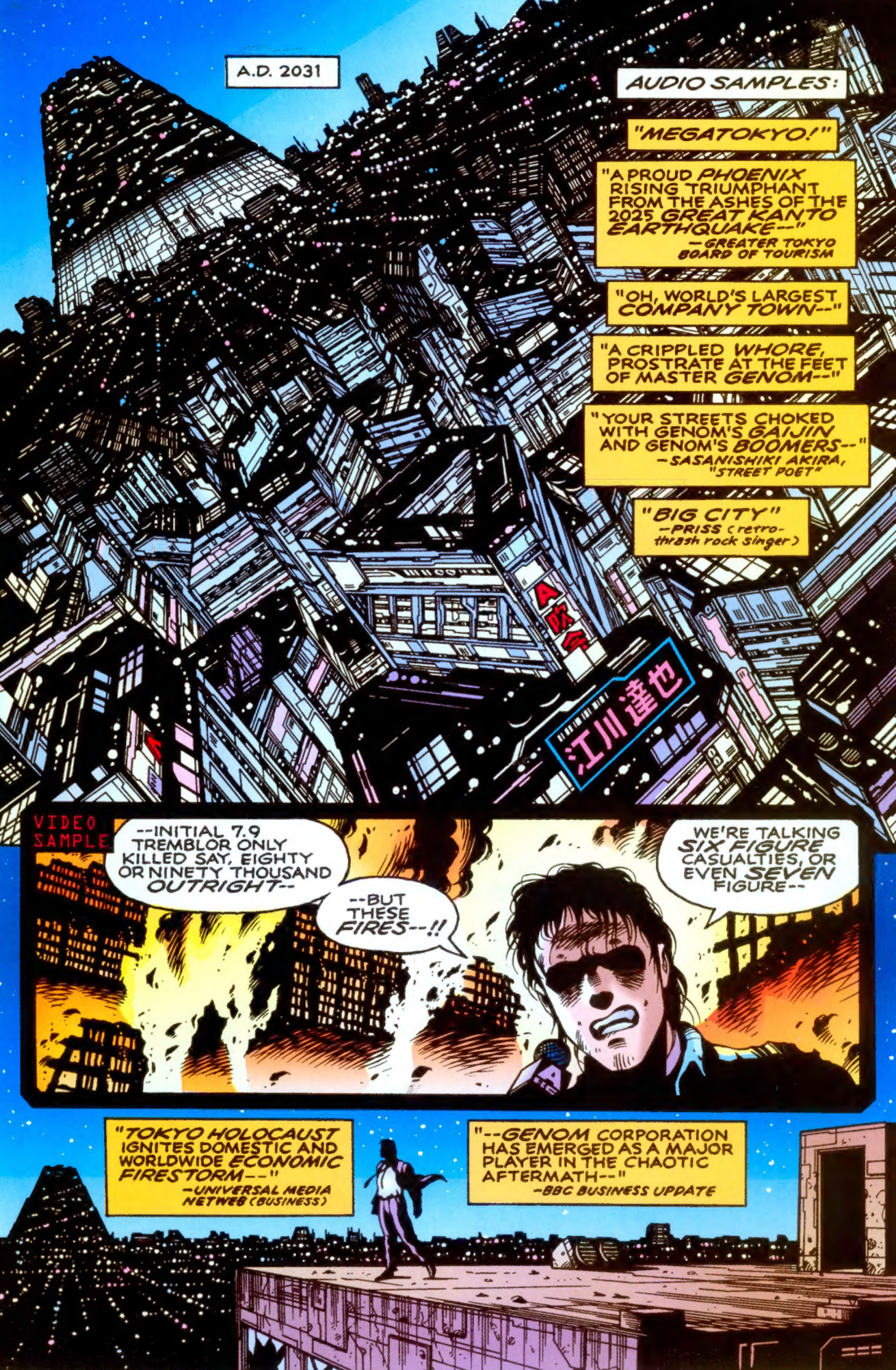
—Kenichi Sonoda

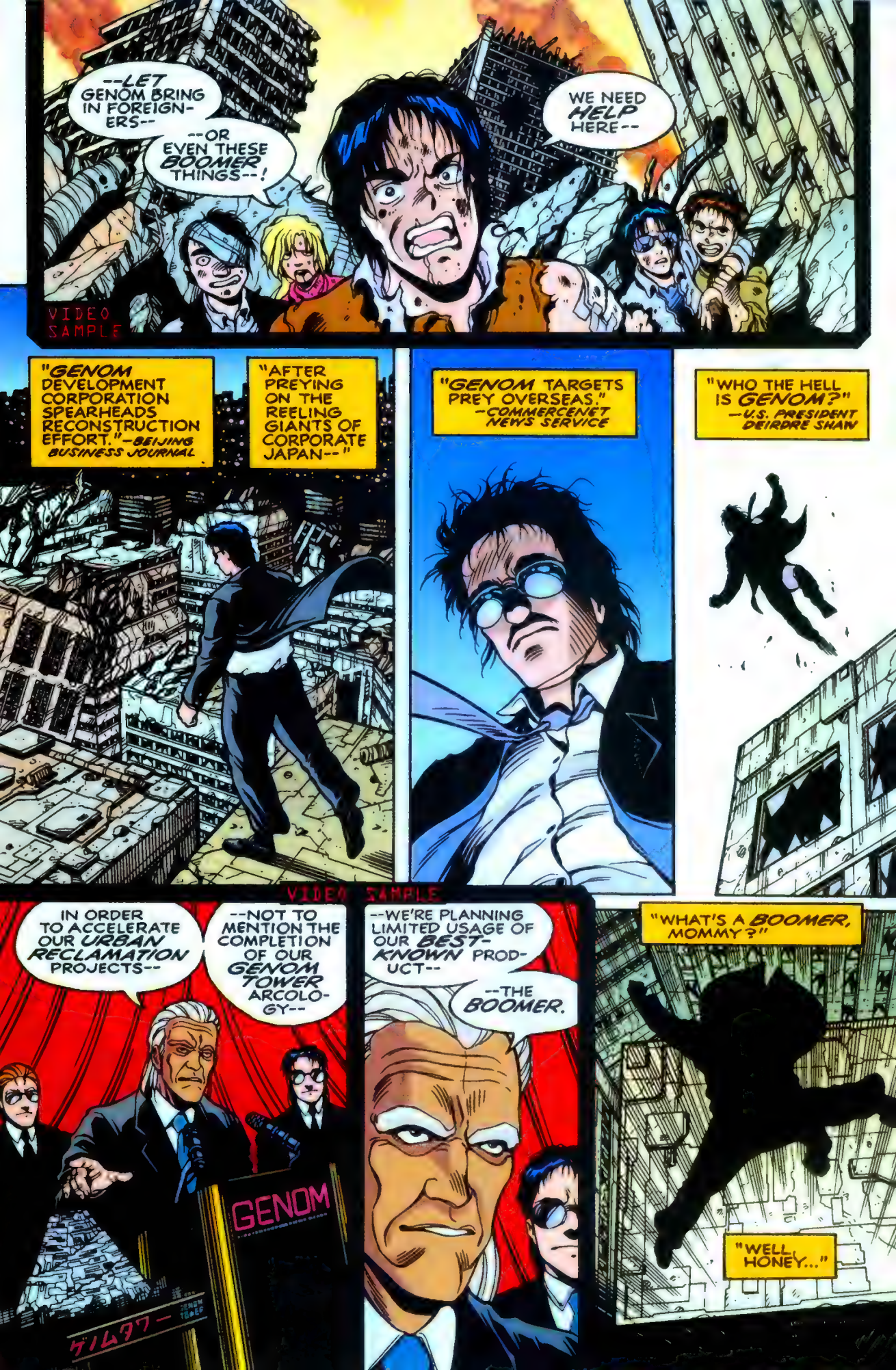
(Who has been mired in the depths of Doom for three months now . . .)

CHAPTER ONE


DAMN IT.
--BEGINNING OUR FINAL APPROACH TO NARITA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT--
THANK YOU FOR FLYING JAPAN AIR-LINES--
ALMOST MADE IT THROUGH THE FLIGHT.
--A SUBSIDIARY OF GENOM DEVELOPMENT CORPORA-TION!
OCCUPIED
SO MUCH FOR MED-ICATION.
FIRST, THE SUDDEN EUPHORIC STATE SWEEPS OVER ME.
THAT'S THE REALLY ANNOY-ING PART, HAVING TO FEEL HAPPY ABOUT THIS...
NEXT COME THE CHILLS--
--RIGHT ON SCHEDULE.
ANY-TIME NOW--
--THE HALLUCI-NATIONS SHOULD KICK IN.

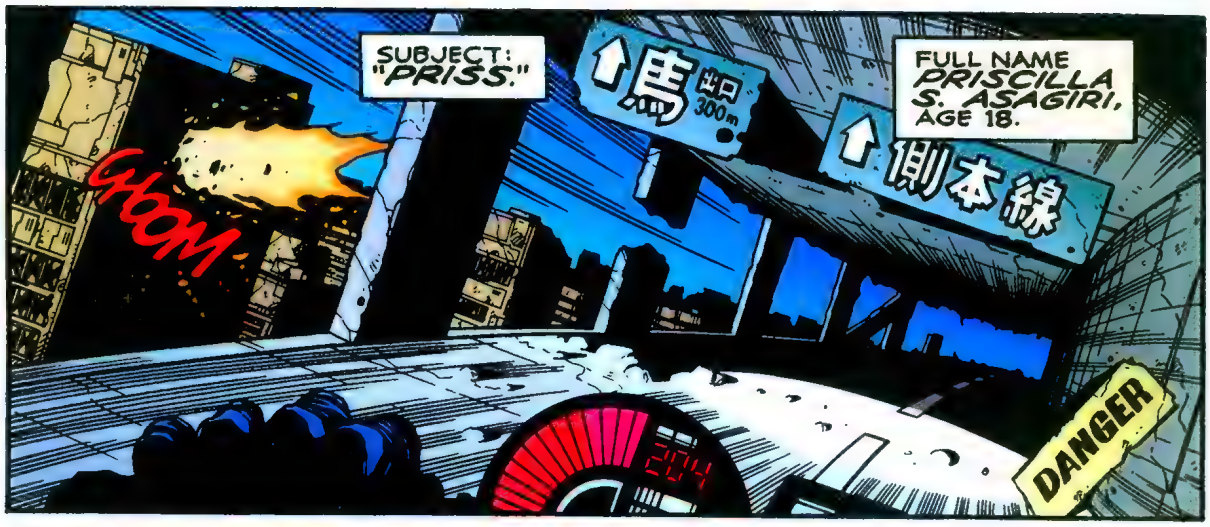

AH, THERE THEY ARE.
THE SAME THINGS APPEAR EVERY TIME, NOW...
MECHANICAL IMAGERY.
APPARENTLY MY RUINED EXCUSE FOR A TEMPORAL LOBE PREFERS ITS SYMBOLISM ON THE OBVIOUS SIDE.
AND, COMING UP--
--OUR FEATURE PRESENTATION--
--UNCONTROLLABLE VIOLENCE.
NECESSARILY DIRECTED AT MYSELF, AGAIN.
HOPE THIS TIME WON'T BE TOO DAMAGING...
I'M RUNNING OUT OF PIECES OF MYSELF TO SACRIFICE.
WELL, HERE IT COMES.
WHAT BETTER WAY--
--TO CELEBRATE MY TRIUMPHANT RETURN TO MEGATOKYO--?

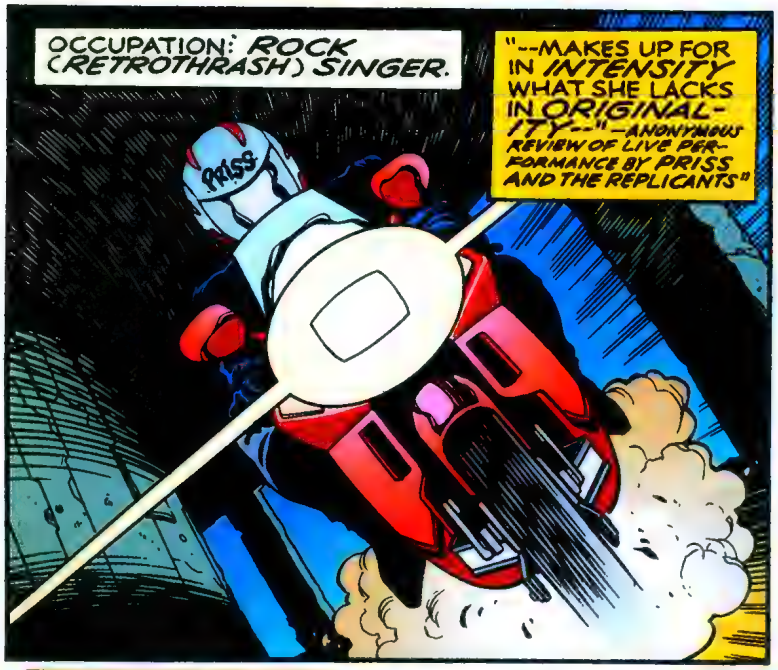

A.D. 2031
AUDIO SAMPLES:
"MEGATOKYO!"
"A PROUD PHOENIX RISING TRIUMPHANT FROM THE ASHES OF THE 2025 GREAT KANTO EARTHQUAKE--"
—GREATER TOKYO BOARD OF TOURISM
"OH, WORLD'S LARGEST COMPANY TOWN--"
"A CRIPPLED WHORE, PROSTRATE AT THE FEET OF MASTER GENOM--"
"YOUR STREETS CHOKED WITH GENOM'S GAIJIN AND GENOM'S BOOMERS--"
—SASANISHIKI AKIRA, "STREET POET"
"BIG CITY"
—PRISS (retro-thrash rock singer)
江川達也
VIDEO SAMPLE
--INITIAL 7.9 TREMBLOR ONLY KILLED SAY, EIGHTY OR NINETY THOUSAND OUTRIGHT--
--BUT THESE FIRES--!!
WE'RE TALKING SIX FIGURE CASUALTIES, OR EVEN SEVEN FIGURE--
"TOKYO HOLOCAUST IGNITES DOMESTIC AND WORLDWIDE ECONOMIC FIRESTORM--"
—UNIVERSAL MEDIA NETWEB (BUSINESS)
"--GENOM CORPORATION HAS EMERGED AS A MAJOR PLAYER IN THE CHAOTIC AFTERMATH--"
—BBC BUSINESS UPDATE


--LET GENOM BRING IN FOREIGN-ERS--
--OR EVEN THESE BOOMER THINGS--!
WE NEED HELP HERE--
VIDEO SAMPLE
"GENOM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION SPEARHEADS RECONSTRUCTION EFFORT."—BEIJING BUSINESS JOURNAL
"AFTER PREYING ON THE REELING GIANTS OF CORPORATE JAPAN--"
"GENOM TARGETS PREY OVERSEAS" —COMMERCENET NEWS SERVICE
"WHO THE HELL IS GENOM?" —U.S. PRESIDENT DEIRDRE SHAW
VIDEO SAMPLE
IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE OUR URBAN RECLAMATION PROJECTS--
--NOT TO MENTION THE COMPLETION OF OUR GENOM TOWER ARCOLO-GY--
GENOM
--WE'RE PLANNING LIMITED USAGE OF OUR BEST-KNOWN PROD-UCT--
--THE BOOMER.
"WHAT'S A BOOMER, MOMMY?"
"WELL, HONEY..."

WHRUNCH
"...A BOOMER IS AN ARTI-FICIAL LIFE FORM."
VIDEO SAMPLE
CONTROVERSIAL "BOOMERS," SEEN HERE HARD AT WORK ON ONE OF GENOM'S "URBAN RECLAMATION" SITES.
BIG FELLOWS, AREN'T THEY...
ECLAMATION
"A SYNTHESIS OF MECHATRONICS, BIOTECHNOLOGY, AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE..."
"...DESIGNED TO SUB-STITUTE FOR HUMANS IN SPACE..."
"...AND OTHER DANGEROUS PLACES..."
—"TETSUO AND THE BIG BLUE BOOMER" (CHILDREN'S VIDEO)

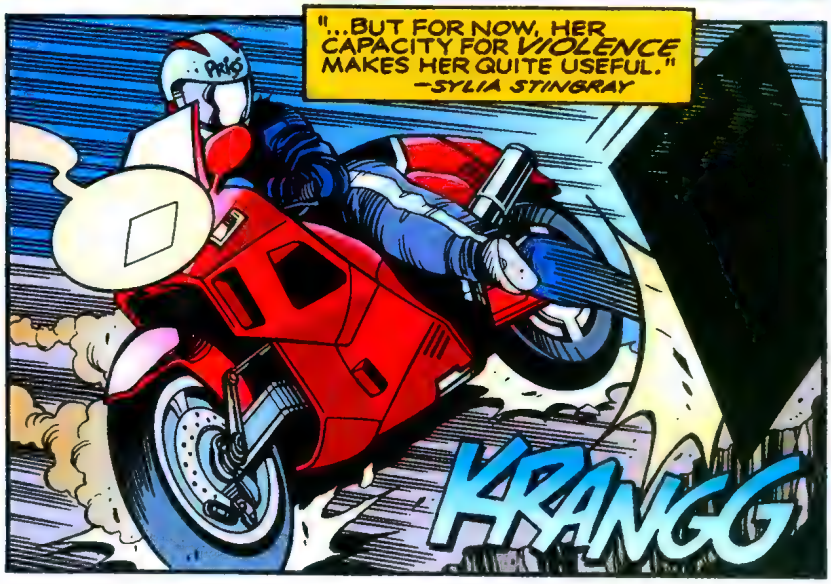
VIDEO SAMPLE
BOOMERS AND YOU--
--A WINNING COMBINATION FOR A SAFE FUTURE!
SHRAKK
WHIRRR
VRTTTT
VREEE
AT THIS TIME WE CANNOT CONFIRM RUMORS OF POSSIBLE BOOMER INVOLVEMENT IN THIS HEINOUS CRIME--
--TWELVE DEAD, AND AT LEAST TWENTY-FIVE INJURED.
RAMPAGE
VIDEO SAMPLE
BZAAAAA

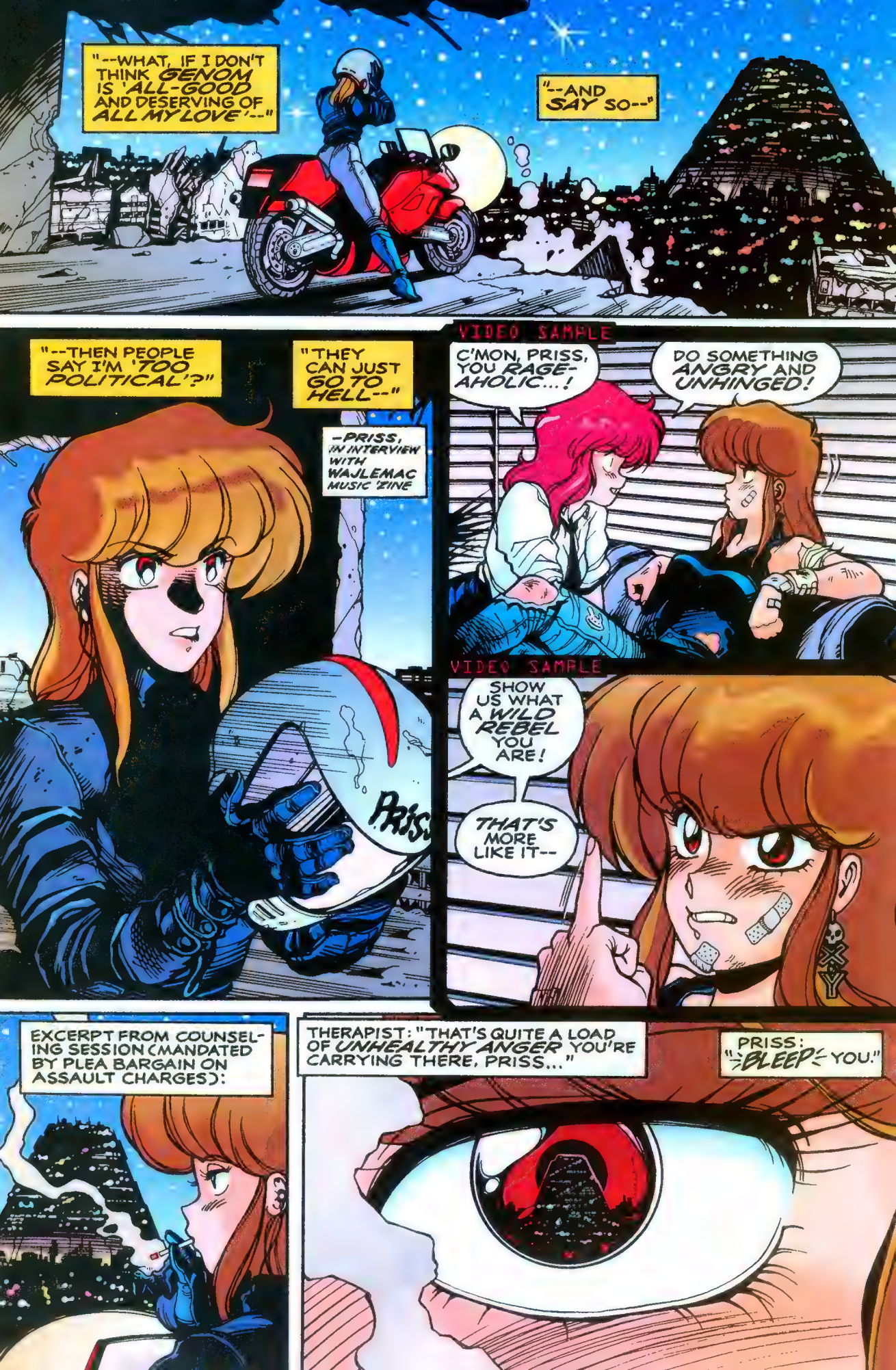

SUBJECT: "PRISS."
FULL NAME PRISCILLA S. ASAGIRI, AGE 18.
KHOOM
DANGER

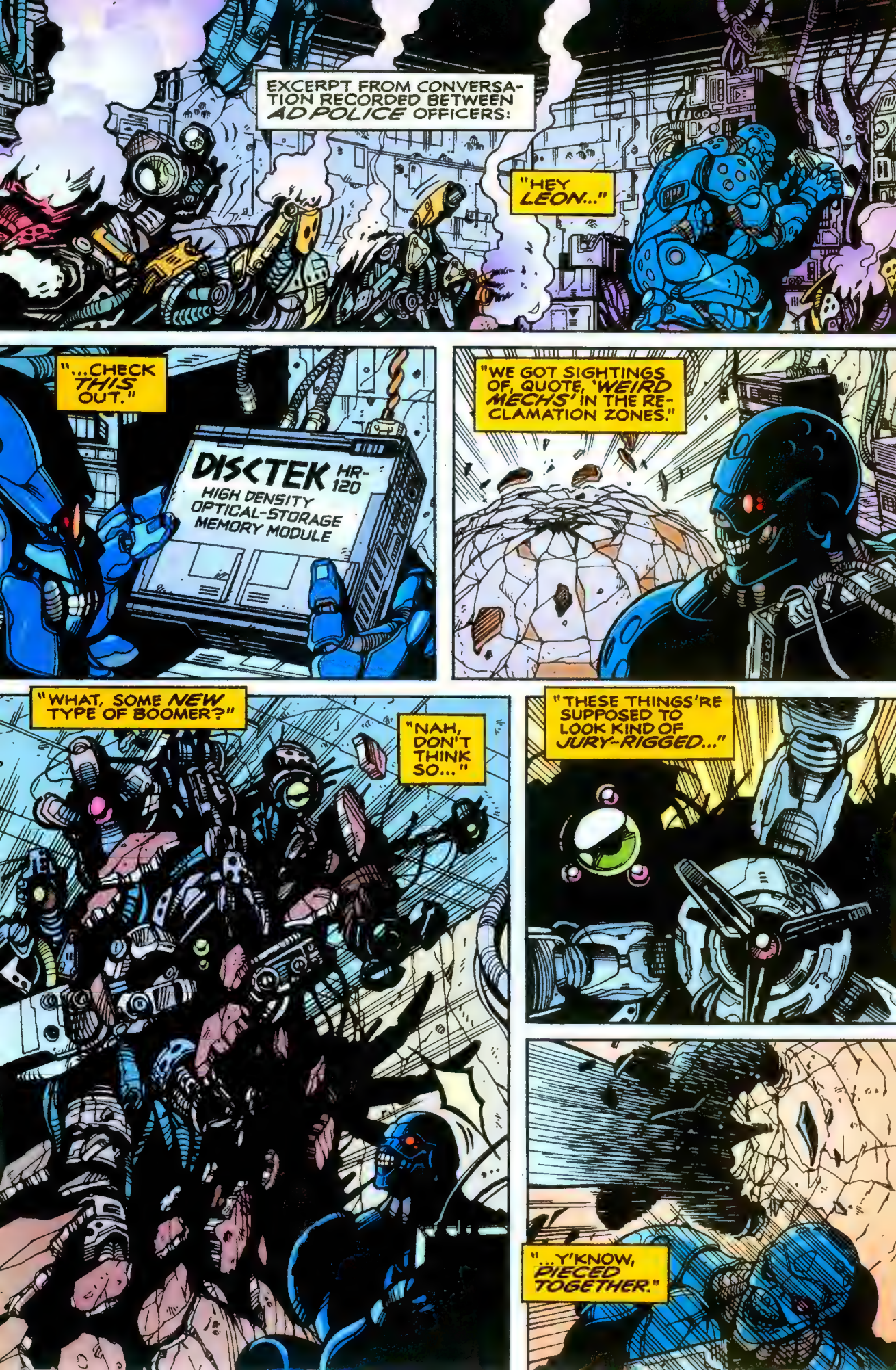

OCCUPATION: ROCK (RETROTHRASH) SINGER.
"--MAKES UP FOR IN INTENSITY WHAT SHE LACKS IN ORIGINALITY--" -ANONYMOUS REVIEW OF LIVE PERFORMANCE BY PRISS AND THE REPLICANTS"

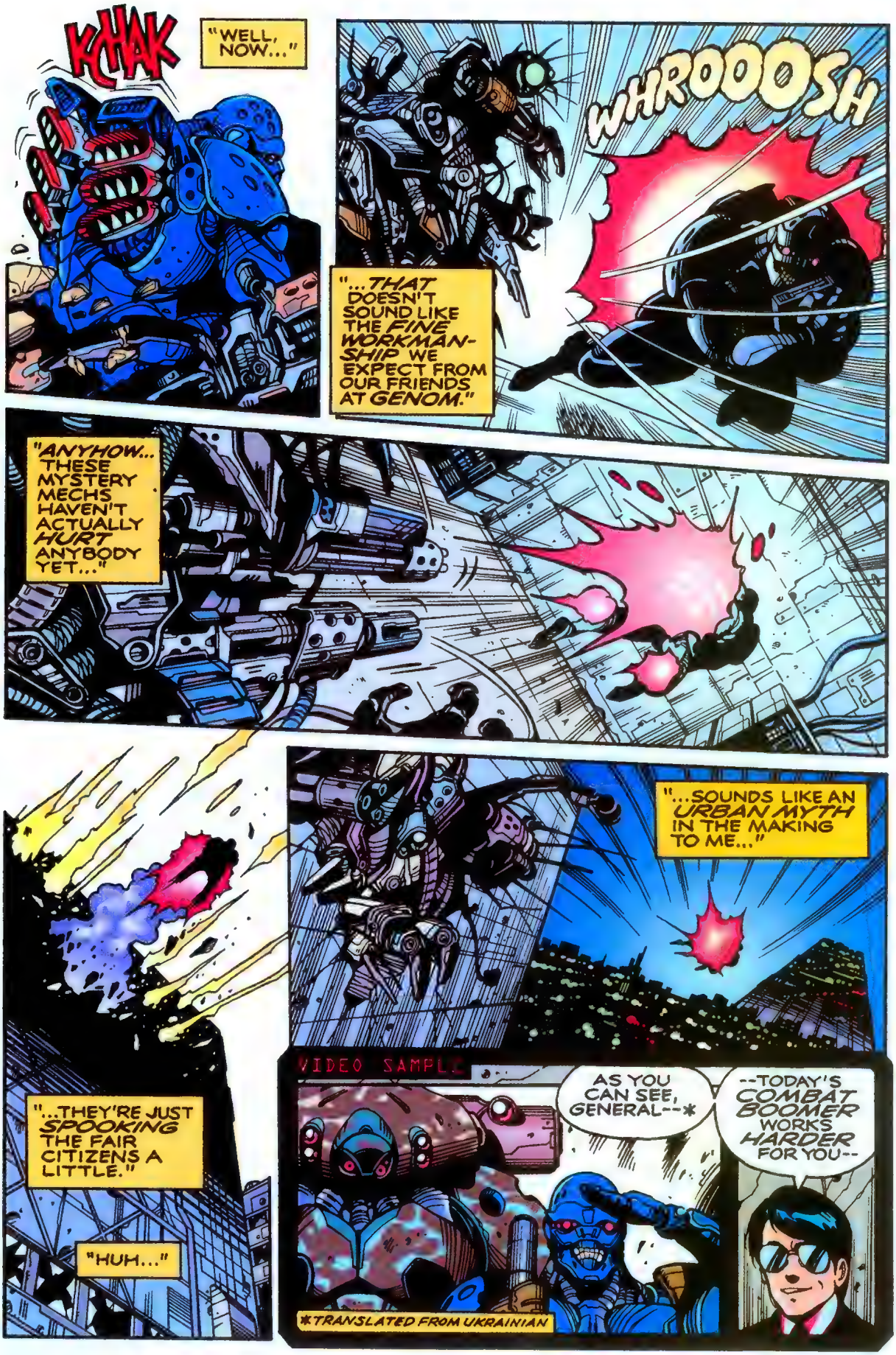
"ADMITTEDLY, PRISS IS SOMEWHAT OF AN UNGUIDED MISSILE."
PRISS

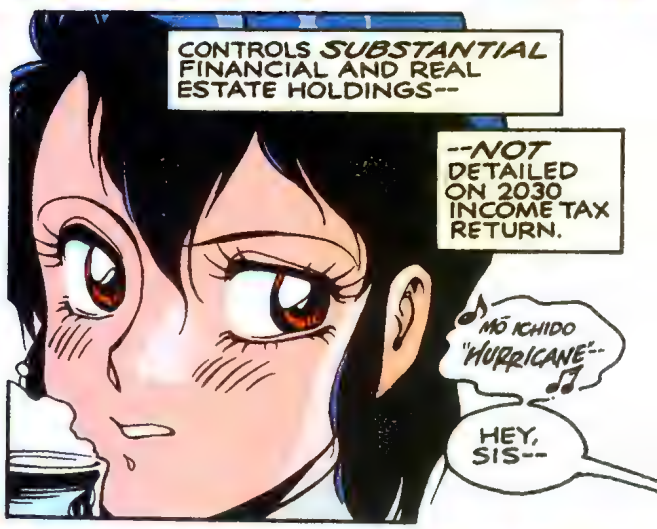
"DOWN THE ROAD, HER INSTABILITY MAY POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS..."
GENOM
GENOM REPAIR GROUP
A DIVISION OF GENOM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
urban reclamation!™

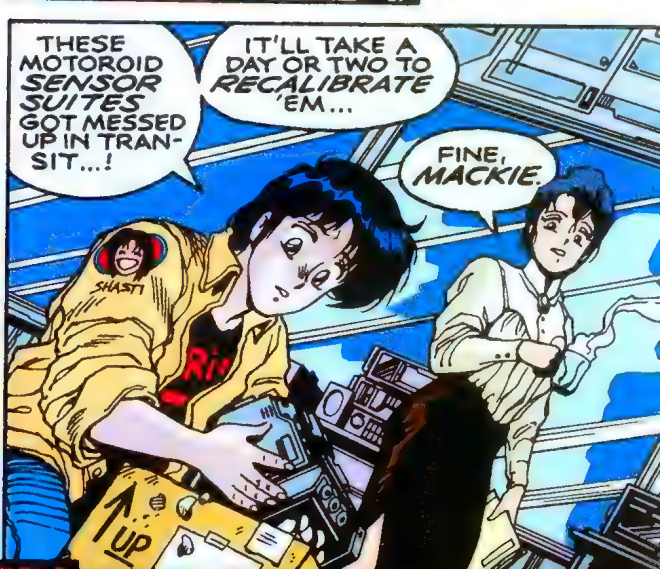

"...BUT FOR NOW, HER CAPACITY FOR VIOLENCE MAKES HER QUITE USEFUL."
-SYLIA STINGRAY
KRANGG


"--WHAT, IF I DON'T THINK GENOM IS 'ALL-GOOD AND DESERVING OF ALL MY LOVE'--"
"--AND SAY SO--"
"--THEN PEOPLE SAY I'M 'TOO POLITICAL'?"
"THEY CAN JUST GO TO HELL--"
-PRISS, IN INTERVIEW WITH WAJLEMAC MUSIC 'ZINE
PRISS
VIDEO SAMPLE
C'MON, PRISS, YOU RAGE-AHOLIC...!
DO SOMETHING ANGRY AND UNHINGED!
VIDEO SAMPLE
SHOW US WHAT A WILD REBEL YOU ARE!
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT--
EXCERPT FROM COUNSELING SESSION (MANDATED BY PLEA BARGAIN ON ASSAULT CHARGES):
THERAPIST: "THAT'S QUITE A LOAD OF UNHEALTHY ANGER YOU'RE CARRYING THERE, PRISS..."
PRISS: "=BLEEP= YOU."

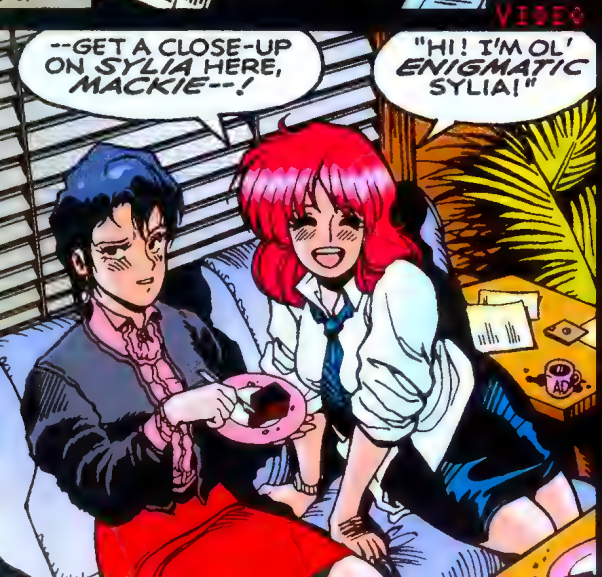

EXCERPT FROM CONVERSATION RECORDED BETWEEN AD POLICE OFFICERS:
"HEY LEON..."
"...CHECK THIS OUT."
DISCTEK HR-120
HIGH DENSITY OPTICAL-STORAGE MEMORY MODULE
"WE GOT SIGHTINGS OF, QUOTE, 'WEIRD MECHS' IN THE RECLAMATION ZONES."
"WHAT, SOME NEW TYPE OF BOOMER?"
"NAH, DON'T THINK SO..."
"THESE THINGS'RE SUPPOSED TO LOOK KIND OF JURY-RIGGED..."
"...Y'KNOW, PIECED TOGETHER."

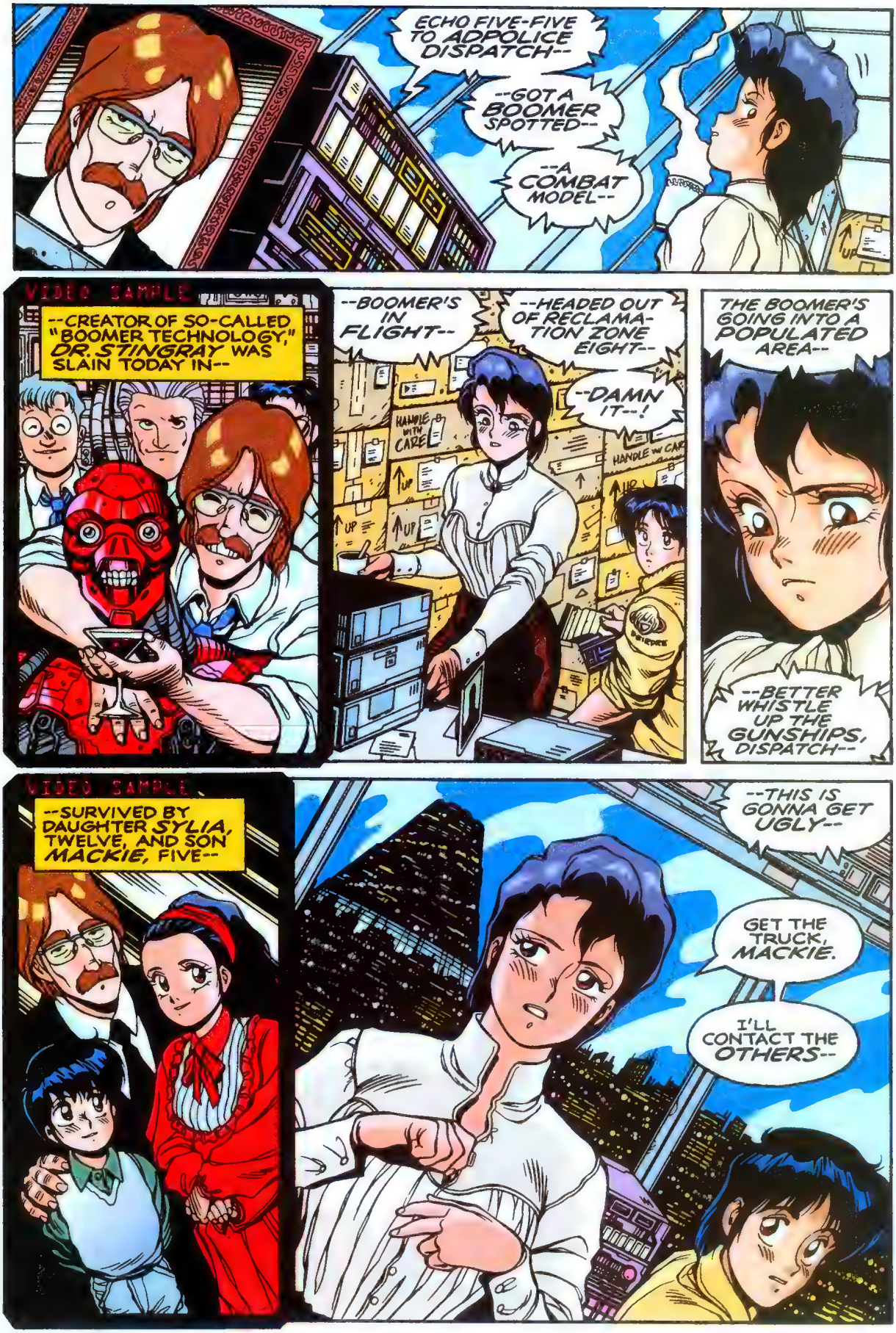

KCHAK
"WELL, NOW..."
WHROOOSH
"...THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE THE FINE WORKMANSHIP WE EXPECT FROM OUR FRIENDS AT GENOM."
"ANYHOW... THESE MYSTERY MECHS HAVEN'T ACTUALLY HURT ANYBODY YET..."
"...SOUNDS LIKE AN URBAN MYTH IN THE MAKING TO ME..."
"...THEY'RE JUST SPOOKING THE FAIR CITIZENS A LITTLE."
"HUH..."
VIDEO SAMPLE
AS YOU CAN SEE, GENERAL--*
--TODAY'S COMBAT BOOMER WORKS HARDER FOR YOU--
*TRANSLATED FROM UKRAINIAN



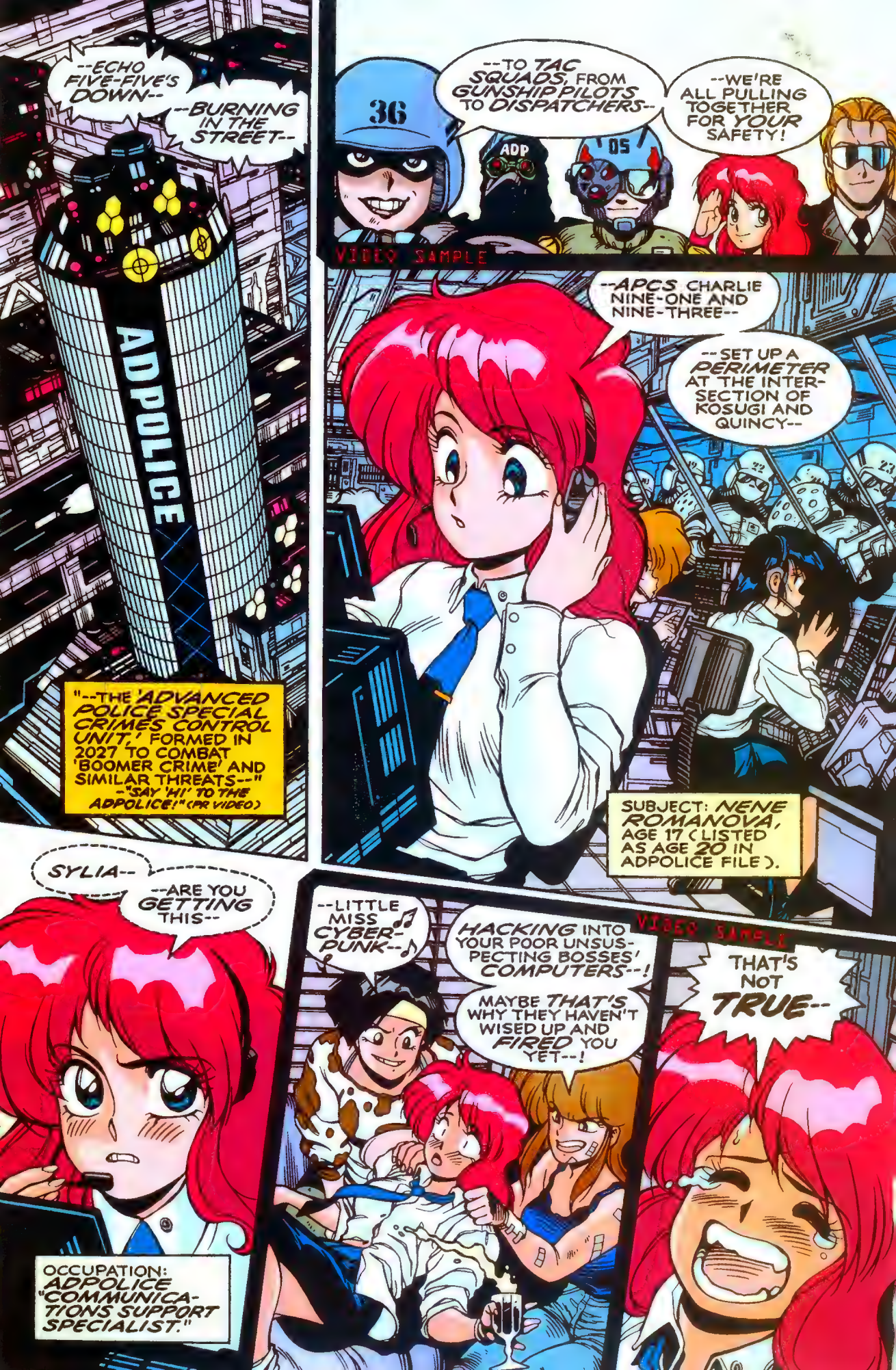


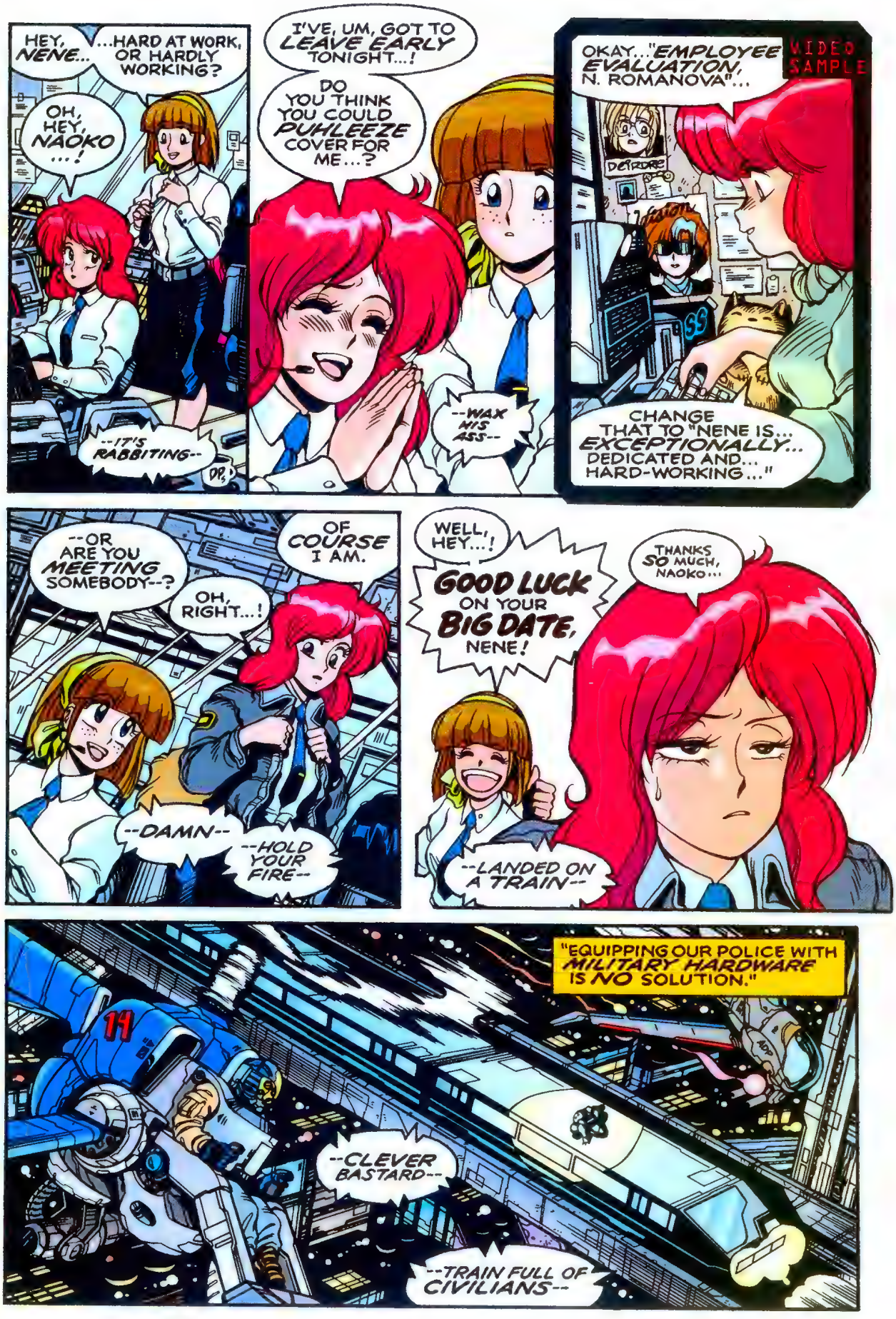
VIDEO SAMPLE

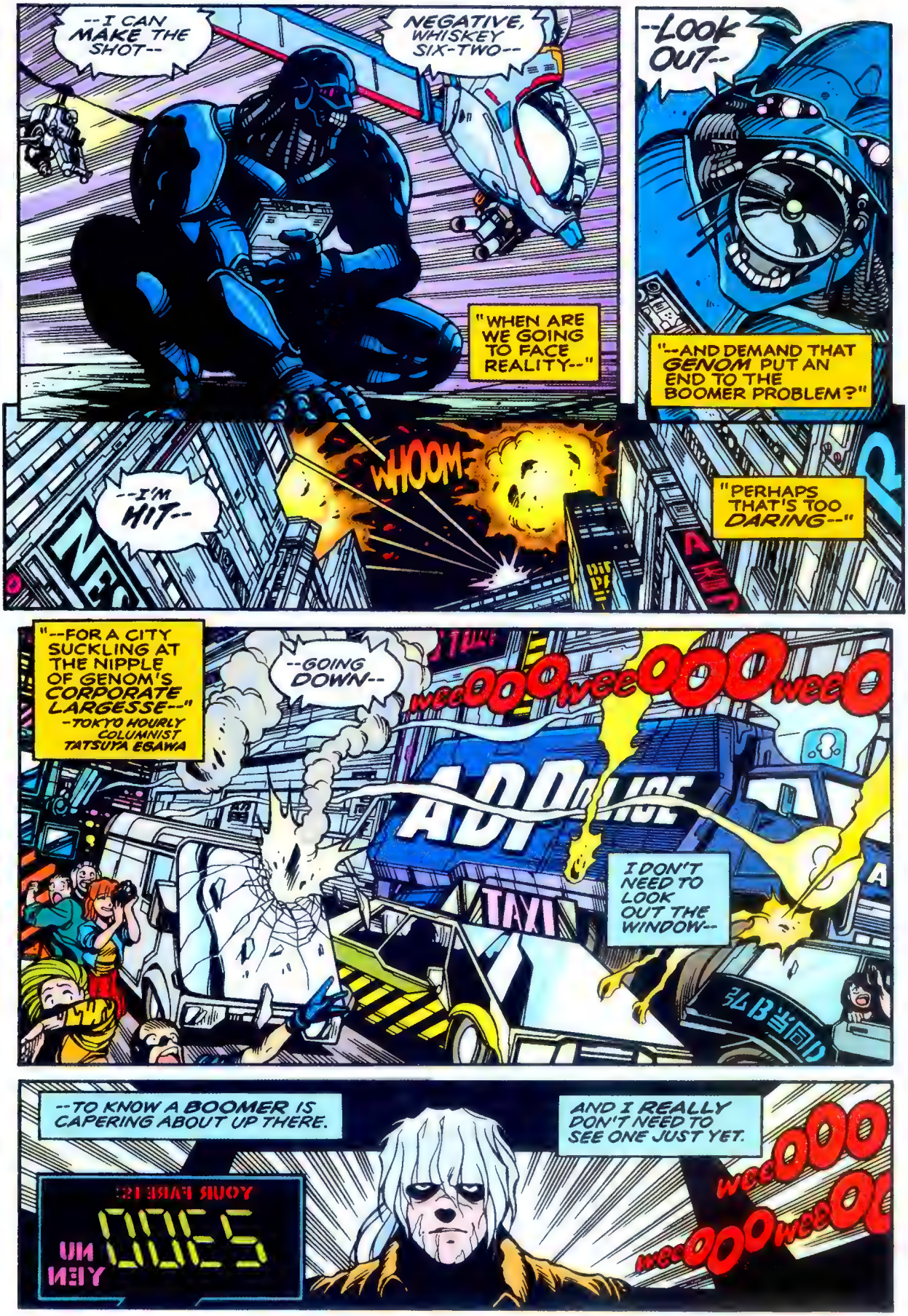


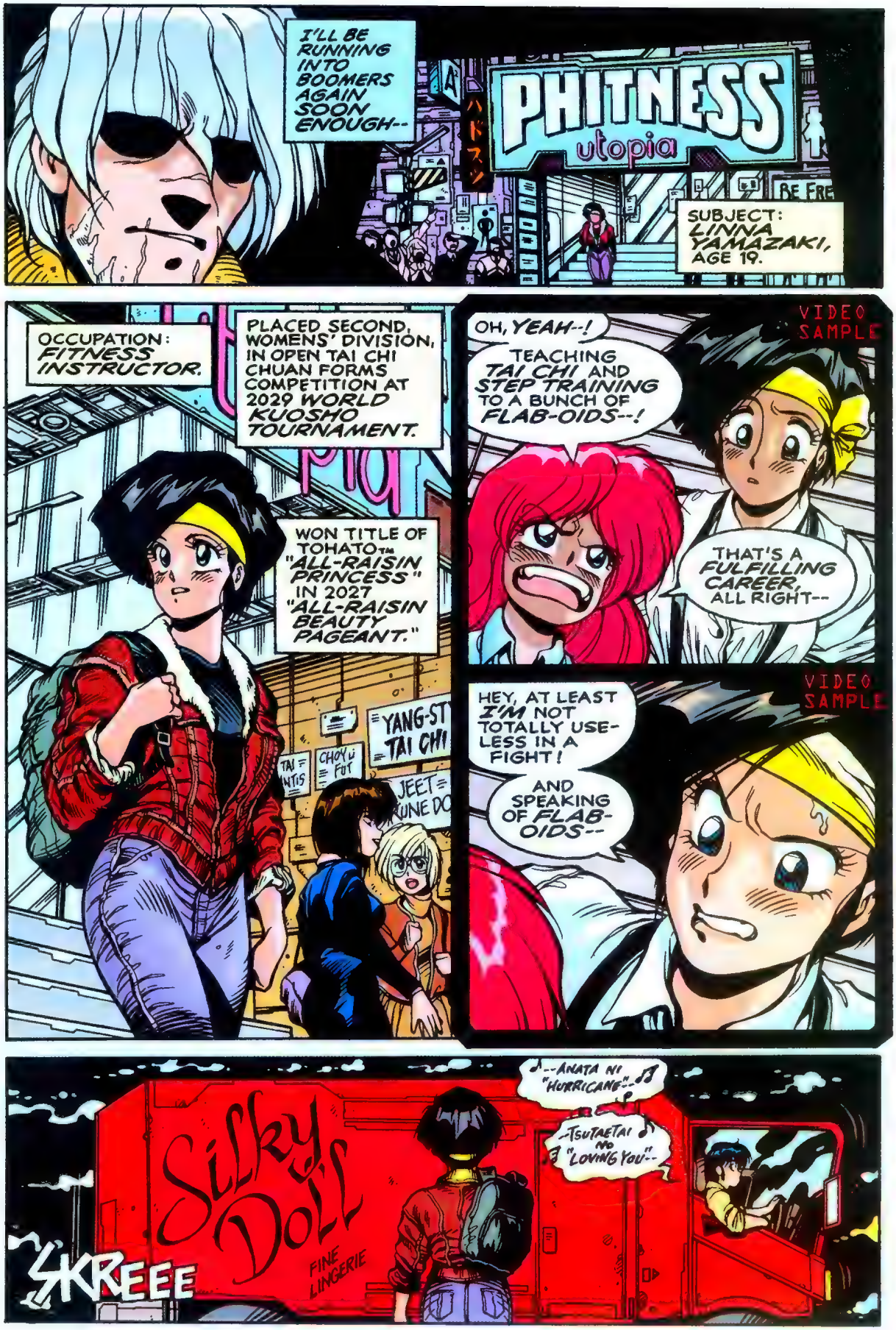

ECHO FIVE-FIVE TO ADPOLICE DISPATCH--
--GOT A BOOMER SPOTTED--
--A COMBAT MODEL--
VIDEO SAMPLE
--CREATOR OF SO-CALLED "BOOMER TECHNOLOGY," DR. STINGRAY WAS SLAIN TODAY IN--
--BOOMER'S IN FLIGHT--
--HEADED OUT OF RECLAMATION ZONE EIGHT--
--DAMN IT--!
HANDLE WITH CARE
THE BOOMER'S GOING INTO A POPULATED AREA--
--BETTER WHISTLE UP THE GUNSHIPS, DISPATCH--
VIDEO SAMPLE
--SURVIVED BY DAUGHTER SYLIA, TWELVE, AND SON MACKIE, FIVE--
--THIS IS GONNA GET UGLY--
GET THE TRUCK, MACKIE.
I'LL CONTACT THE OTHERS--

--IT'S FINALLY LANDED, DISPATCH--
POLICE
WE'RE VECTORING IN WHISKEY SQUADRON, ECHO FIVE-FIVE--
--JUST KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, FROM THE BOGEY--
HELL, IT MAY BE A COMBAT MODEL--
ADP
--BUT IT HASN'T SHOWN ANY FIRE-POWER YET--
VIDEO SAMPLE
JOIN THE ELITE!
JOIN THE ADVEN-TURE!
38
22
Join the ADPolice!
HRAAAA
OH, SHIT--
VIDEO SAMPLE
EDITORIAL
LIKE YOUR POLICE FORCE OVERBEARING, OVERBUDGETED AND OVERARMED?
WELL, OUR VERY OWN "ADVANCED POLICE" SHOULD BE JUST WHAT YOU'RE--
WHROOM
POLICE
EEYAAA--
VIDEO SAMPLE
KILLED IN ACTION
2029
2030
2031
TSUYA EGAWA
TSUKASA DOKITE
NG MUI
JAMES ELLROY
CHOW YUN FAT
KERSON HUANG
THOM JONES
KEVIN J. SLEET
LOOK AT THAT LIST--
--TELL ME AGAIN HOW →BLEEP←-ING OVER-ARMED WE ARE--
28

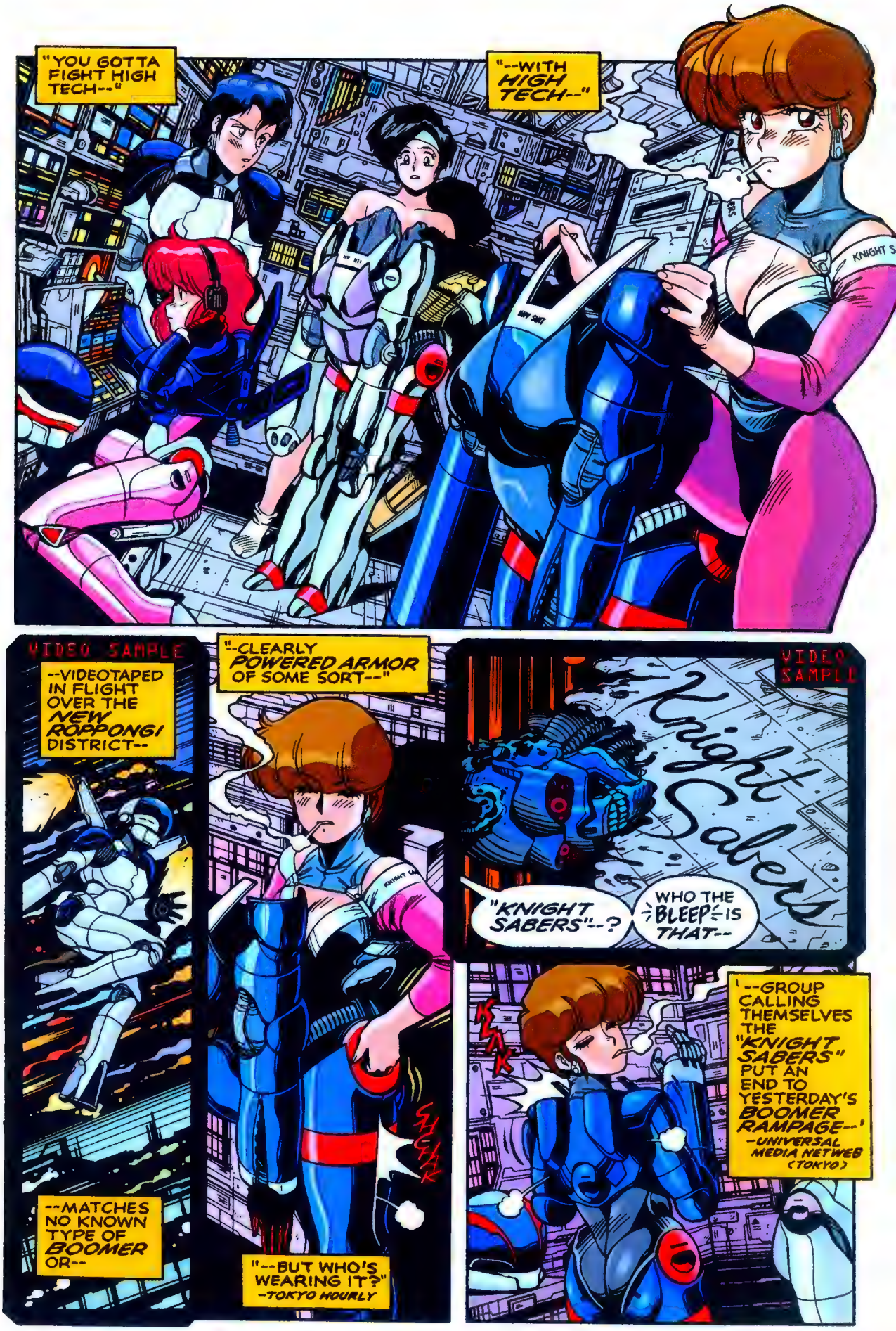

--ECHO FIVE-FIVE'S DOWN--
--BURNING IN THE STREET--
ADPOLICE
"--THE 'ADVANCED POLICE SPECIAL CRIMES CONTROL UNIT,' FORMED IN 2027 TO COMBAT 'BOOMER CRIME' AND SIMILAR THREATS--"
-"SAY 'HI' TO THE ADPOLICE!" (PR VIDEO)
36
--TO TAC SQUADS, FROM GUNSHIP PILOTS TO DISPATCHERS--
--WE'RE ALL PULLING TOGETHER FOR YOUR SAFETY!
ADP
OS
VIDEO SAMPLE
--APCS CHARLIE NINE-ONE AND NINE-THREE--
--SET UP A PERIMETER AT THE INTER-SECTION OF KOSUGI AND QUINCY--
SUBJECT: NENE ROMANOVA, AGE 17 (LISTED AS AGE 20 IN ADPOLICE FILE).
SYLIA--
--ARE YOU GETTING THIS--
OCCUPATION: ADPOLICE "COMMUNICA-TIONS SUPPORT SPECIALIST."
--LITTLE MISS CYBER-PUNK--♪
HACKING INTO YOUR POOR UNSUS-PECTING BOSSES' COMPUTERS--!
MAYBE THAT'S WHY THEY HAVEN'T WISED UP AND FIRED YOU YET--!
VIDEO SAMPLE
THAT'S NOT TRUE--

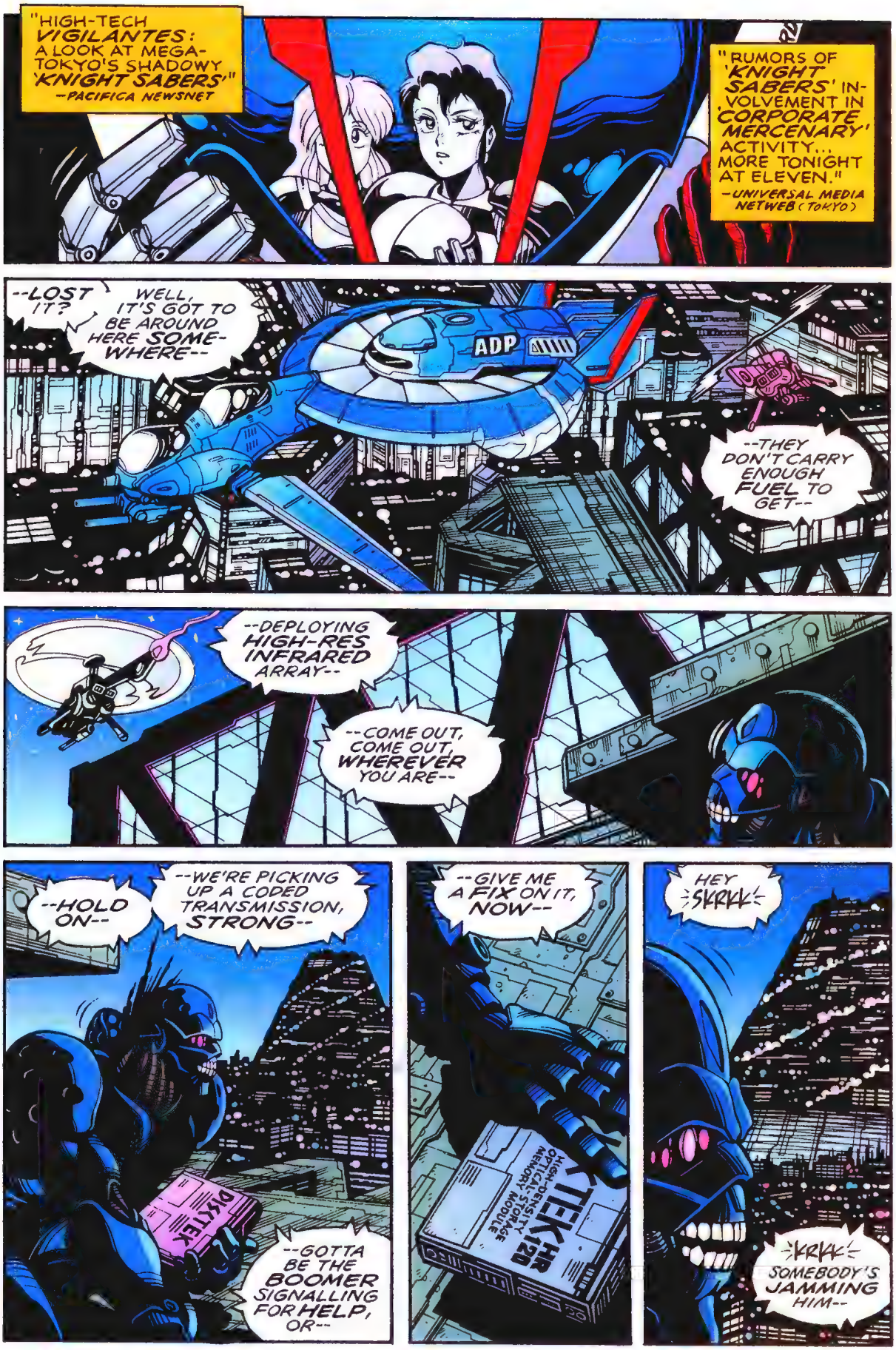

HEY, NENE...
...HARD AT WORK, OR HARDLY WORKING?
OH, HEY, NAOKO...!
--IT'S RABBITING--
I'VE, UM, GOT TO LEAVE EARLY TONIGHT...!
DO YOU THINK YOU COULD PUHLEEZE COVER FOR ME...?
--WAX HIS ASS--
OKAY..."EMPLOYEE EVALUATION, N. ROMANOVA"...
VIDEO SAMPLE
DEIRDRE
CHANGE THAT TO "NENE IS... EXCEPTIONALLY... DEDICATED AND... HARD-WORKING..."
--OR ARE YOU MEETING SOMEBODY--?
OF COURSE I AM.
OH, RIGHT...!
--DAMN--
--HOLD YOUR FIRE--
WELL, HEY...!
GOOD LUCK ON YOUR BIG DATE, NENE!
THANKS SO MUCH, NAOKO...
--LANDED ON A TRAIN--
"EQUIPPING OUR POLICE WITH MILITARY HARDWARE IS NO SOLUTION."
--CLEVER BASTARD--
--TRAIN FULL OF CIVILIANS--


--I CAN MAKE THE SHOT--
NEGATIVE, WHISKEY SIX-TWO--
"WHEN ARE WE GOING TO FACE REALITY--"
--LOOK OUT--
"--AND DEMAND THAT GENOM PUT AN END TO THE BOOMER PROBLEM?"
WHOOM
--I'M HIT--
"PERHAPS THAT'S TOO DARING--"
"--FOR A CITY SUCKLING AT THE NIPPLE OF GENOM'S CORPORATE LARGESSE--" -TOKYO HOURLY COLUMNIST TATSUYA EGAWA
--GOING DOWN--
WEEOOOWEEOOOWEEO
TAXI
I DON'T NEED TO LOOK OUT THE WINDOW--
--TO KNOW A BOOMER IS CAPERING ABOUT UP THERE.
AND I REALLY DON'T NEED TO SEE ONE JUST YET.
WEEOOO
WEEOOOWEEO


I'LL BE RUNNING INTO BOOMERS AGAIN SOON ENOUGH--
PHITNESS utopia
SUBJECT: LINNA YAMAZAKI, AGE 19.
OCCUPATION: FITNESS INSTRUCTOR.
PLACED SECOND, WOMENS' DIVISION, IN OPEN TAI CHI CHUAN FORMS COMPETITION AT 2029 WORLD KUOSHO TOURNAMENT.
WON TITLE OF TOHATO™ "ALL-RAISIN PRINCESS" IN 2027 "ALL-RAISIN BEAUTY PAGEANT."
YANG-ST TAI CHI
CHOY LI FUT
OH, YEAH--!
TEACHING TAI CHI AND STEP TRAINING TO A BUNCH OF FLAB-OIDS--!
VIDEO SAMPLE
THAT'S A FULFILLING CAREER, ALL RIGHT--
HEY, AT LEAST I'M NOT TOTALLY USE-LESS IN A FIGHT!
AND SPEAKING OF FLAB-OIDS--
VIDEO SAMPLE
Silky Doll
FINE LINGERIE
SKREEE
♪--ANATA NI "HURRICANE"--♪
♪--TSUTAETAI NO "LOVING YOU"--♪

NEED A RIDE, MISS...?
--HE'S OFF THE TRAIN--
--TAG HIM, TAG HIM--
AS A MATTER OF FACT, YES--
COOL.
--OFFICERS WONG AND MACNICHOL RESPONDING, DISPATCH--
JEEZ, THOSE HELO JOCKEYS 'RE SURE TAKING A BEATING TONIGHT--!
ADP
THE ADP'S ALWAYS TAKING A BEATING, LEON.
IT'S OUR ROLE IN LIFE.
YEAH...
...ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE A TAC SQUAD GRUNT, REMEMBER?
PLINKING AT BOOMERS WITH ASSAULT RIFLES...
SNORT
NO WONDER WE DIDN'T DO SO WELL, SOMETIMES--
VIDEO SAMPLE
--HER ARM--
--WE GOTTA FIND HER ARM, GODDAMMIT--
I'M TELLING YOU, DALEY--
...IT TAKES SERIOUS HARDWARE TO TACKLE BOOMERS.

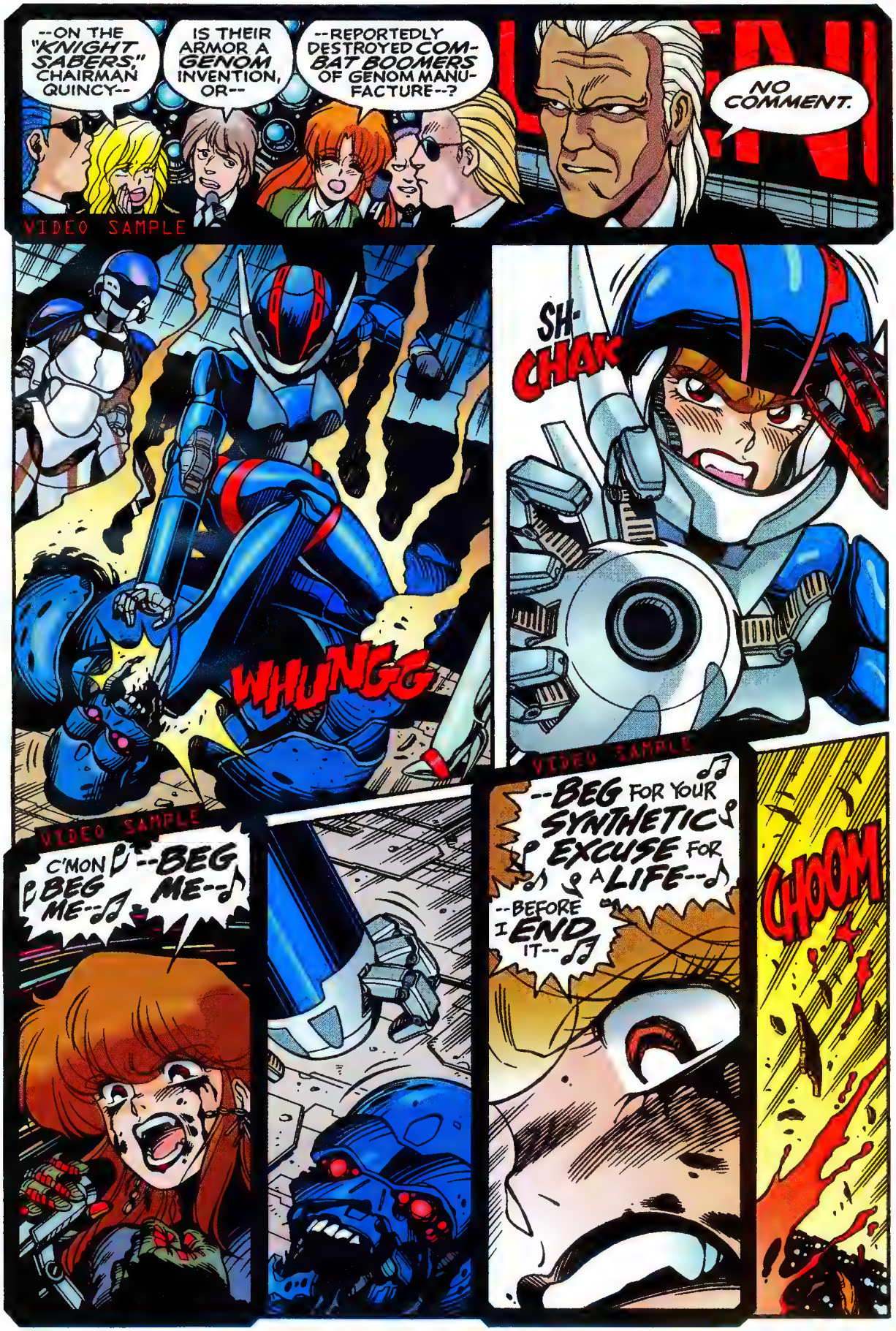

"YOU GOTTA FIGHT HIGH TECH--"
"--WITH HIGH TECH--"
KNIGHT S
VIDEO SAMPLE
--VIDEOTAPED IN FLIGHT OVER THE NEW ROPPONGI DISTRICT--
--MATCHES NO KNOWN TYPE OF BOOMER OR--
"--CLEARLY POWERED ARMOR OF SOME SORT--"
SHAK
"--BUT WHO'S WEARING IT?" -TOKYO HOURLY
VIDEO SAMPLE
Knight Sabers
"KNIGHT SABERS"--?
WHO THE #BLEEP# IS THAT--
KSAK
'--GROUP CALLING THEMSELVES THE "KNIGHT SABERS" PUT AN END TO YESTERDAY'S BOOMER RAMPAGE--' -UNIVERSAL MEDIA NETWEB (TOKYO)


"HIGH-TECH VIGILANTES: A LOOK AT MEGA-TOKYO'S SHADOWY 'KNIGHT SABERS'" —PACIFICA NEWSNET
"RUMORS OF 'KNIGHT SABERS' INVOLVEMENT IN 'CORPORATE MERCENARY' ACTIVITY... MORE TONIGHT AT ELEVEN." —UNIVERSAL MEDIA NETWEB (TOKYO)
--LOST IT?
WELL, IT'S GOT TO BE AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE--
ADP
--THEY DON'T CARRY ENOUGH FUEL TO GET--
--DEPLOYING HIGH-RES INFRARED ARRAY--
--COME OUT, COME OUT, WHEREVER YOU ARE--
--HOLD ON--
--WE'RE PICKING UP A CODED TRANSMISSION, STRONG--
DEXTER
--GOTTA BE THE BOOMER SIGNALLING FOR HELP, OR--
--GIVE ME A FIX ON IT, NOW--
TEKH 128
HIGH-DENSITY OPTICAL STORAGE MEMORY MODULE
HEY
SKRKK
KRKK
SOMEBODY'S JAMMING HIM--

KKK
JAMMING
IZKK US
KRRRKK
HUH?
WHAT THE HELL IS—
DISPATCH TO WHISKEY SQUADRON--
--YOU'RE BREAK-ING UP--
--WE'RE LOSING YOU--

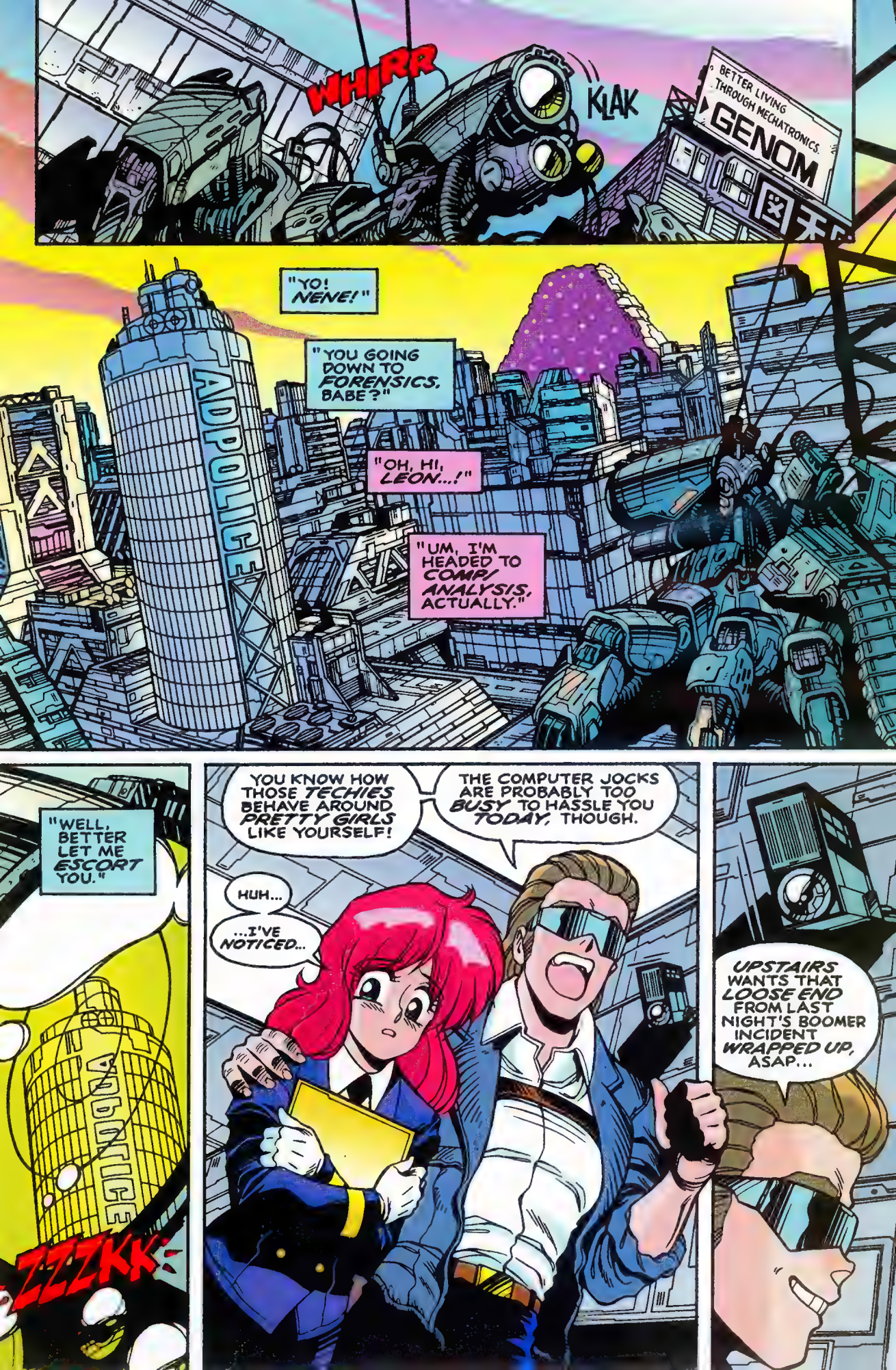
--THESE SO-CALLED "KNIGHT SABERS"--
--HAVE NO CONNECTION WHATSOEVER TO THE ADPOLICE--
'COURSE NOT--
--THEY'RE WAY TOO EFFECTIVE--
VIDEO SAMPLE
HRAAA
FWOOSH
FWOOSH
CHOOM
SHRAK
KLANGG

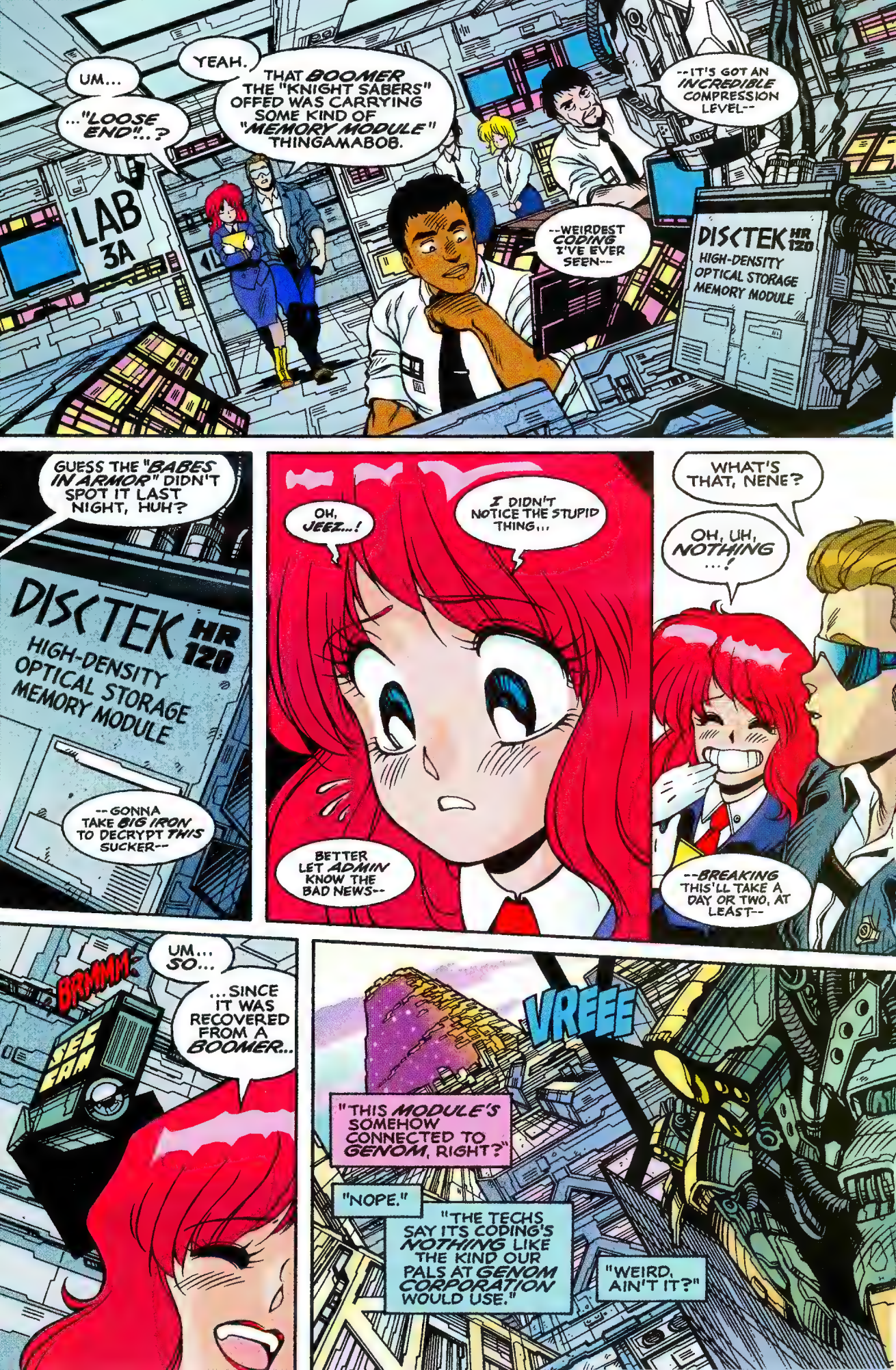
WHSHHH
WHCHAK
SHINNGG
CHOOM
SHINNGG
FWOOM

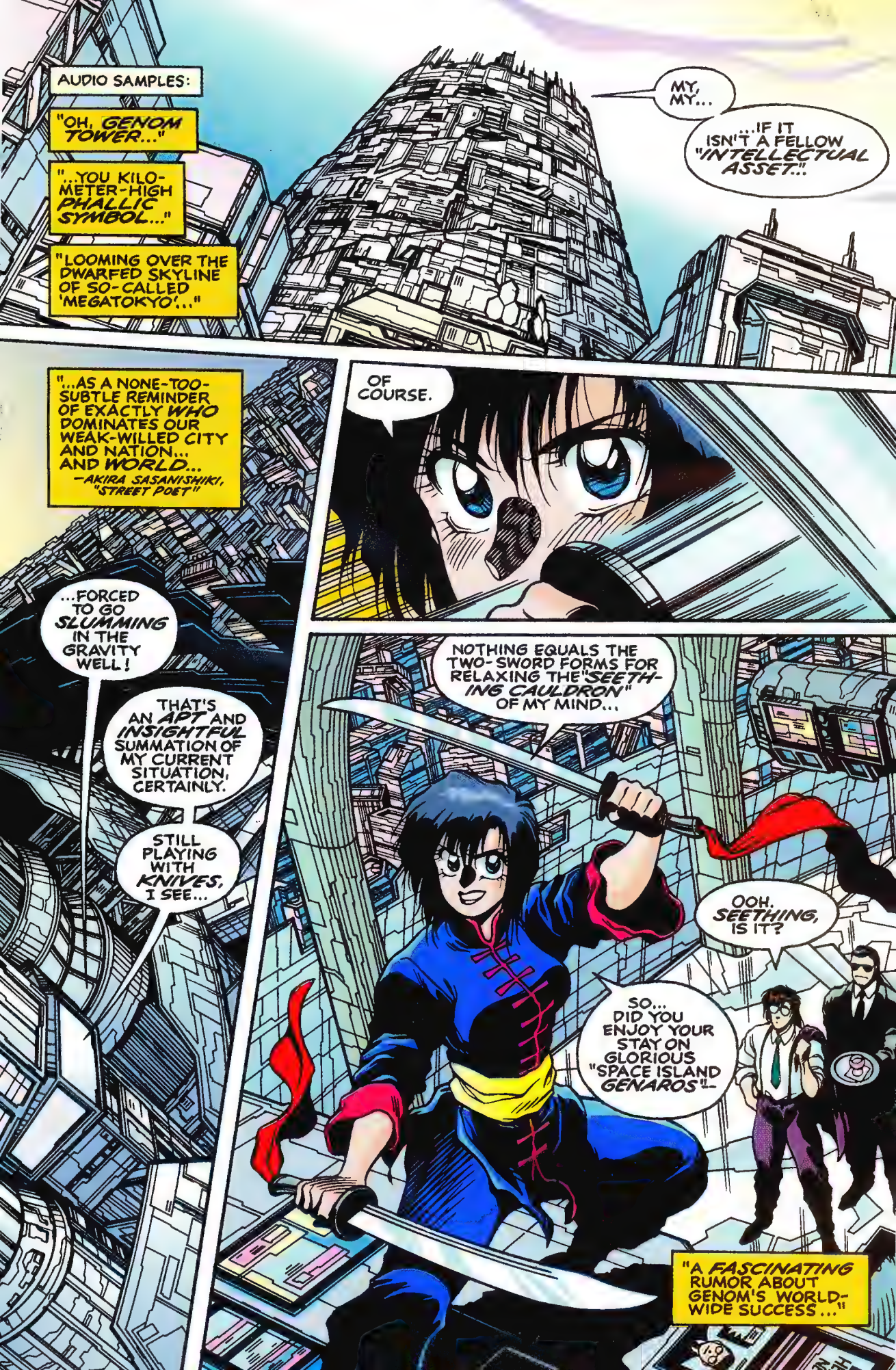

--ON THE "KNIGHT SABERS," CHAIRMAN QUINCY--
IS THEIR ARMOR A GENOM INVENTION, OR--
--REPORTEDLY DESTROYED COMBAT BOOMERS OF GENOM MANUFACTURE--?
NO COMMENT.
VIDEO SAMPLE
WHUNGG
SH-CHAK
VIDEO SAMPLE
VIDEO SAMPLE
C'MON --BEG ME-- BEG ME--
--BEG FOR YOUR SYNTHETIC EXCUSE FOR A LIFE--
--BEFORE I END IT--
CHOOM

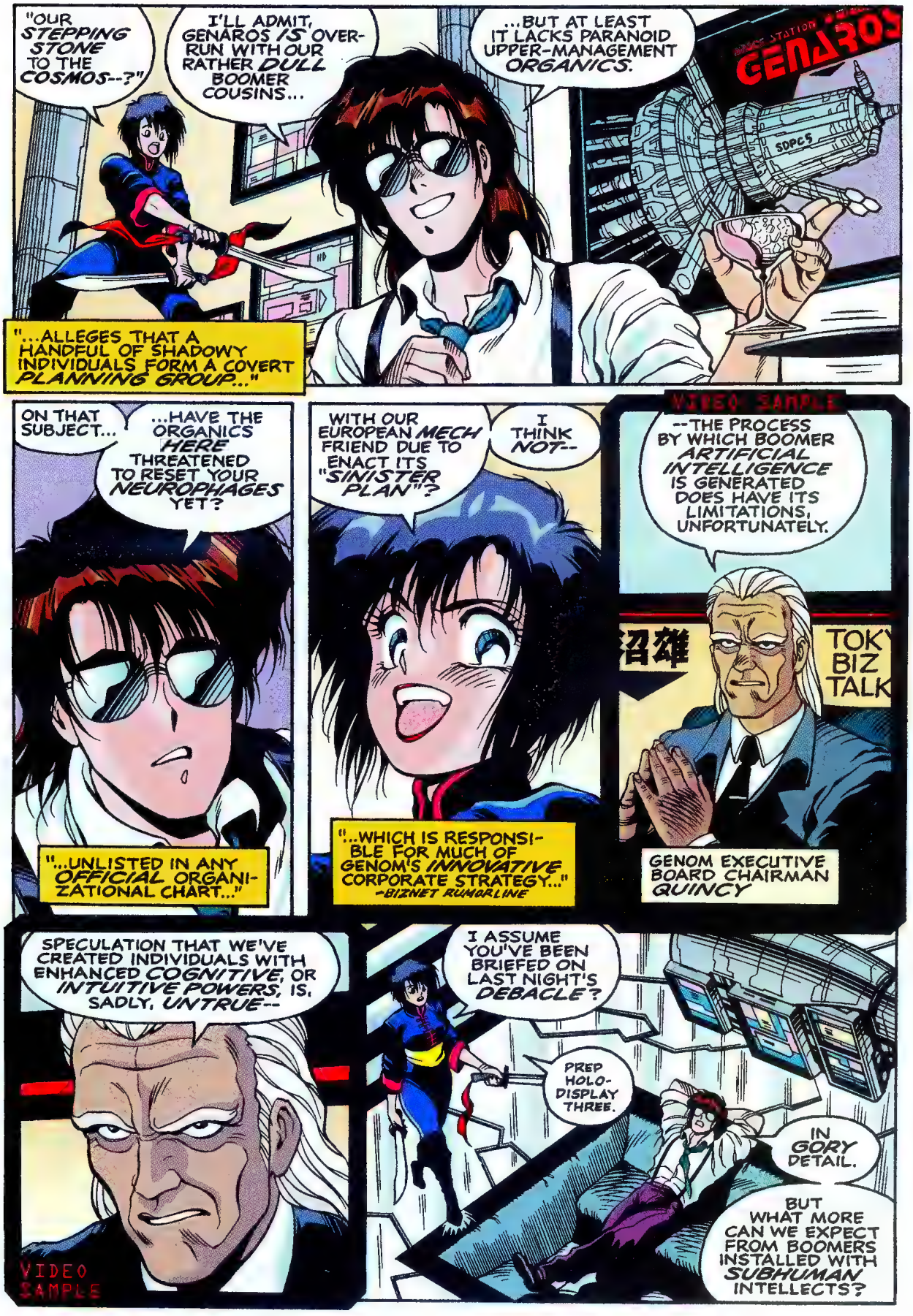
VIDEO SAMPLE
--THE "KNIGHT SABERS"? THEY'RE CRUCIAL REALM!!
THE WAY THEY FIGHT SICKENING VIOLENCE WITH EVEN MORE SICKENING VIOLENCE--
--YOU GOTTA LOVE IT--
Knight Sabers
KNOW WHAT I LIKE ABOUT THESE "KNIGHT SABERS," DALEY?
THEY'VE GOT GOOD HAND-WRITING.
YOU JUST DON'T SEE THAT TOO OFTEN NOW-ADAYS...
THEY'RE NOT TOO SHABBY AT SHREDDING BOOMERS, EITHER...
HEY, MACNICHOL--
--WE FOUND SOME THING--!
LOOK AT THIS!
'S A HIGH-CAPACITY MEMORY MODULE.
THIS MODEL GETS USED AS A REMOVABLE STORAGE DEVICE FOR BACKUP DATA, USUALLY...
42
DISCTEK HR 120
HUH...
WELL, BETTER CALL THE TECHS.
DISCTEK HR 120
HI-DENSITY OPTICAL-STORAGE MEMORY MODULE
EVIDENCE
LOOKS LIKE A NEW PUZZLE FOR THEM TO PLAY WITH...

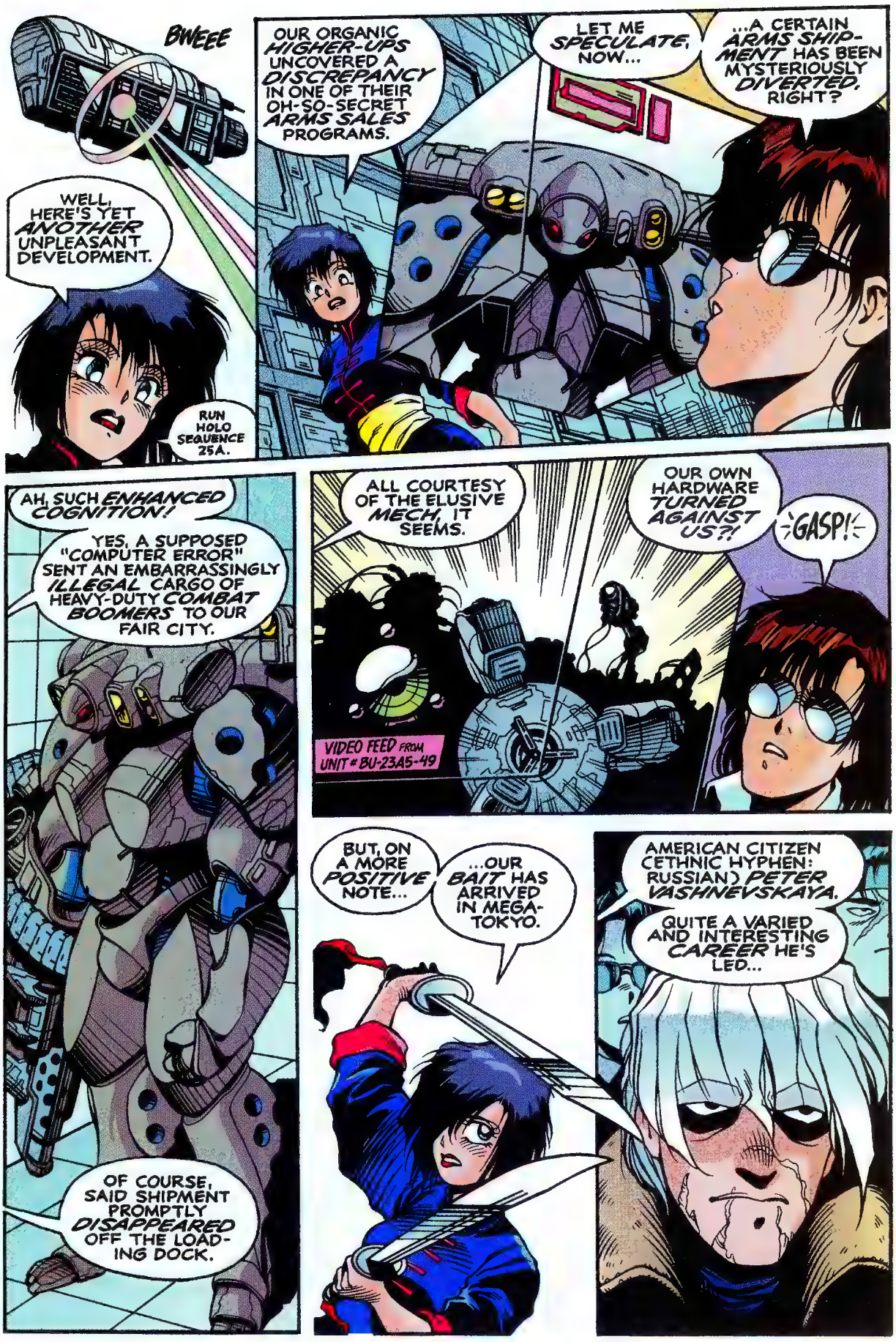
CHAPTER TWO

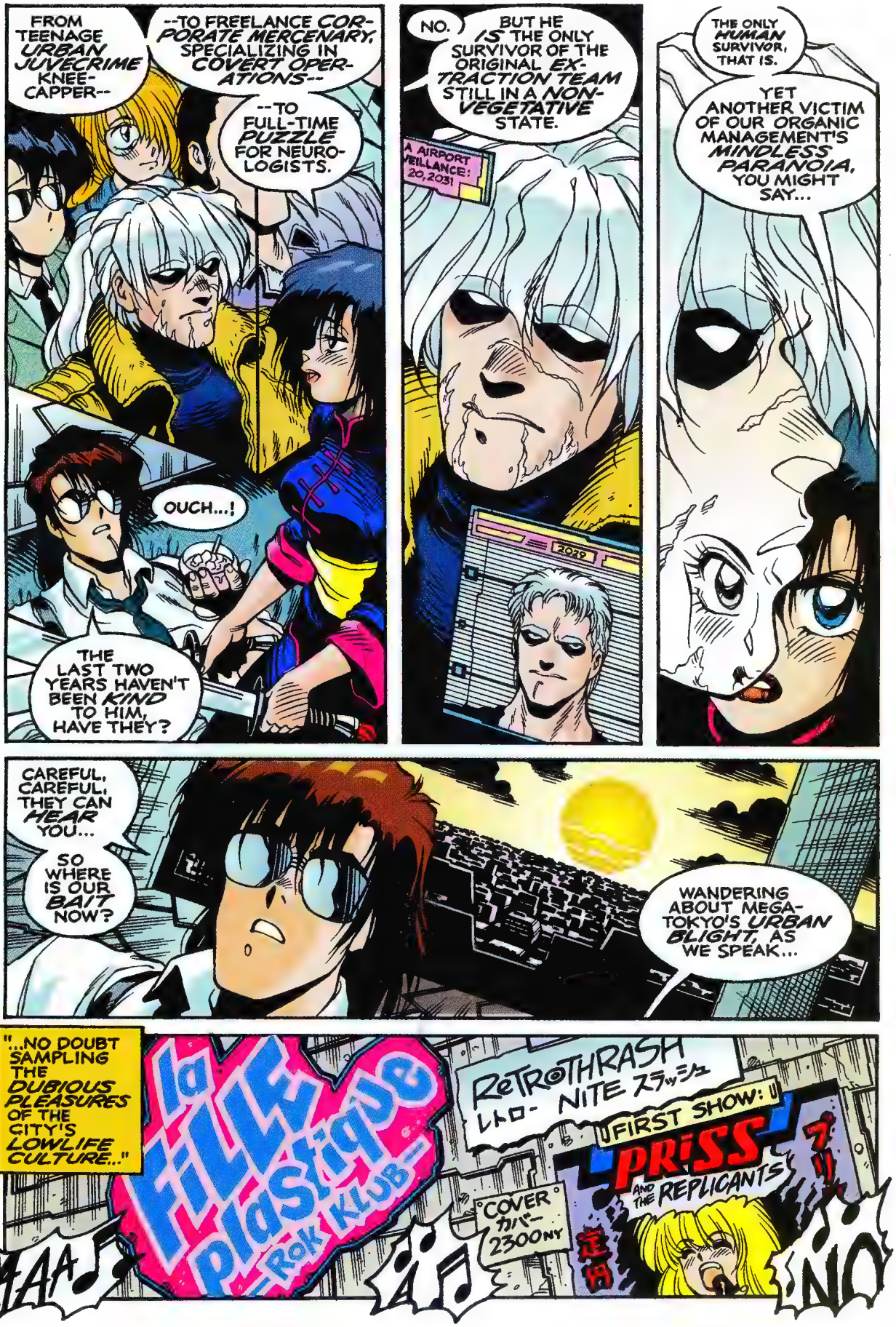

WHIRR
KLAK
BETTER LIVING THROUGH MECHATRONICS.
GENOM
"YO! NENE!"
"YOU GOING DOWN TO FORENSICS, BABE?"
"OH, HI, LEON...!"
"UM, I'M HEADED TO COMP/ ANALYSIS, ACTUALLY."
ADPOLICE
"WELL, BETTER LET ME ESCORT YOU."
ZZZKK
YOU KNOW HOW THOSE TECHIES BEHAVE AROUND PRETTY GIRLS LIKE YOURSELF!
THE COMPUTER JOCKS ARE PROBABLY TOO BUSY TO HASSLE YOU TODAY, THOUGH.
HUH...
...I'VE NOTICED...
UPSTAIRS WANTS THAT LOOSE END FROM LAST NIGHT'S BOOMER INCIDENT WRAPPED UP, ASAP...


UM...
...'LOOSE END'...?
YEAH.
THAT BOOMER THE "KNIGHT SABERS" OFFED WAS CARRYING SOME KIND OF "MEMORY MODULE" THINGAMABOB.
--IT'S GOT AN INCREDIBLE COMPRESSION LEVEL--
--WEIRDEST CODING I'VE EVER SEEN--
LAB 3A
DISCTEK HR 120
HIGH-DENSITY OPTICAL STORAGE MEMORY MODULE
GUESS THE "BABES IN ARMOR" DIDN'T SPOT IT LAST NIGHT, HUH?
DISCTEK HR 120
HIGH-DENSITY OPTICAL STORAGE MEMORY MODULE
--GONNA TAKE BIG IRON TO DECRYPT THIS SUCKER--
OH, JEEZ...!
I DIDN'T NOTICE THE STUPID THING...
BETTER LET ADMIN KNOW THE BAD NEWS--
WHAT'S THAT, NENE?
OH, UH, NOTHING...!
--BREAKING THIS'LL TAKE A DAY OR TWO, AT LEAST--
BRMMM
SEE FAM
UM... SO...
...SINCE IT WAS RECOVERED FROM A BOOMER...
VREEE
"THIS MODULE'S SOMEHOW CONNECTED TO GENOM, RIGHT?"
"NOPE."
"THE TECHS SAY ITS CODING'S NOTHING LIKE THE KIND OUR PALS AT GENOM CORPORATION WOULD USE."
"WEIRD, AIN'T IT?"

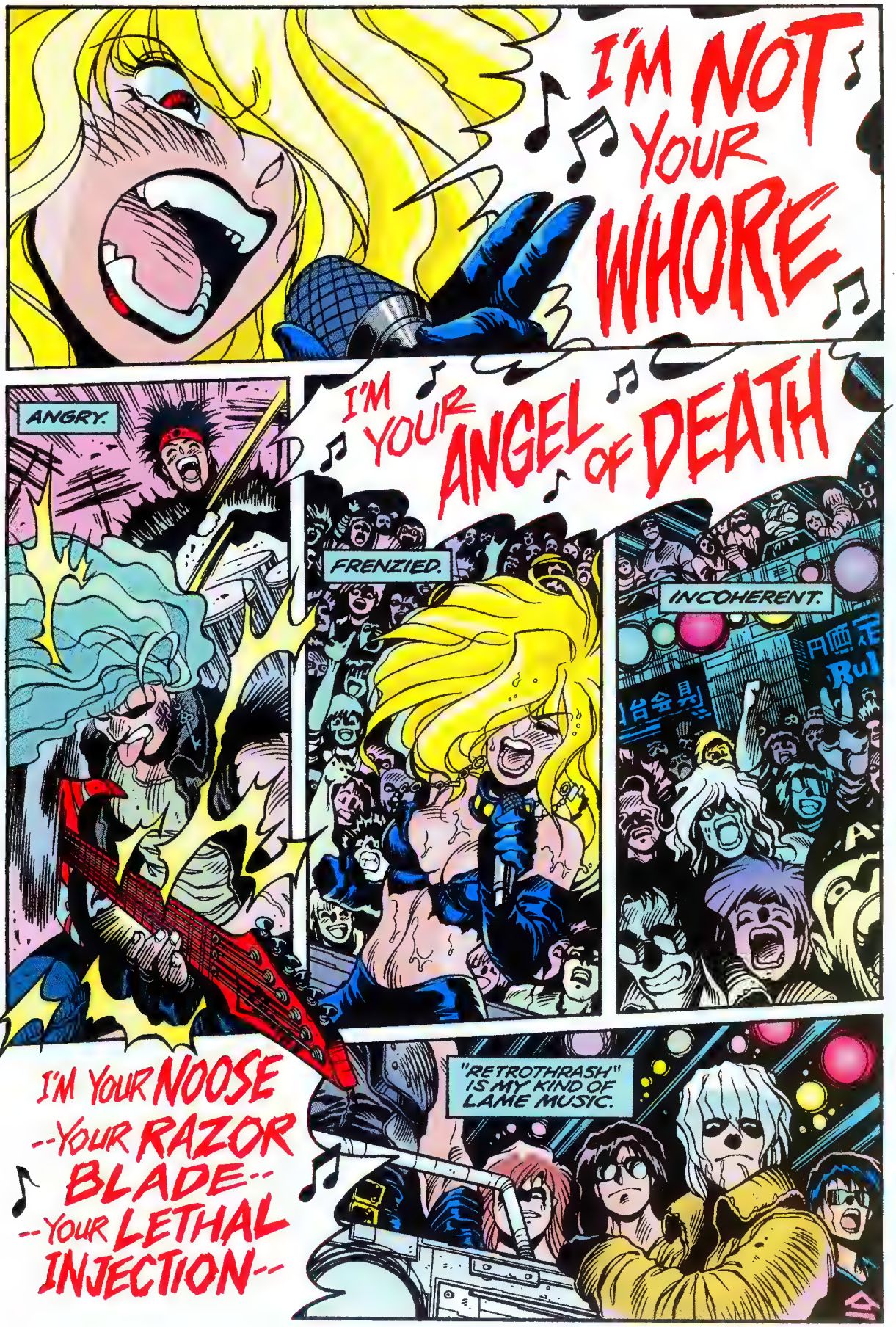

AUDIO SAMPLES:
"OH, GENOM TOWER..."
"...YOU KILO-METER-HIGH PHALLIC SYMBOL..."
"LOOMING OVER THE DWARFED SKYLINE OF SO-CALLED 'MEGATOKYO'..."
MY, MY...
...IF IT ISN'T A FELLOW "INTELLECTUAL ASSET"!
"...AS A NONE-TOO-SUBTLE REMINDER OF EXACTLY WHO DOMINATES OUR WEAK-WILLED CITY AND NATION... AND WORLD..."
—AKIRA SASANISHIKI, "STREET POET"
OF COURSE.
...FORCED TO GO SLUMMING IN THE GRAVITY WELL!
THAT'S AN APT AND INSIGHTFUL SUMMATION OF MY CURRENT SITUATION, CERTAINLY.
STILL PLAYING WITH KNIVES, I SEE...
NOTHING EQUALS THE TWO-SWORD FORMS FOR RELAXING THE "SEETHING CAULDRON" OF MY MIND...
OOH. SEETHING, IS IT?
SO... DID YOU ENJOY YOUR STAY ON GLORIOUS "SPACE ISLAND GENAROS"—
"A FASCINATING RUMOR ABOUT GENOM'S WORLD-WIDE SUCCESS..."

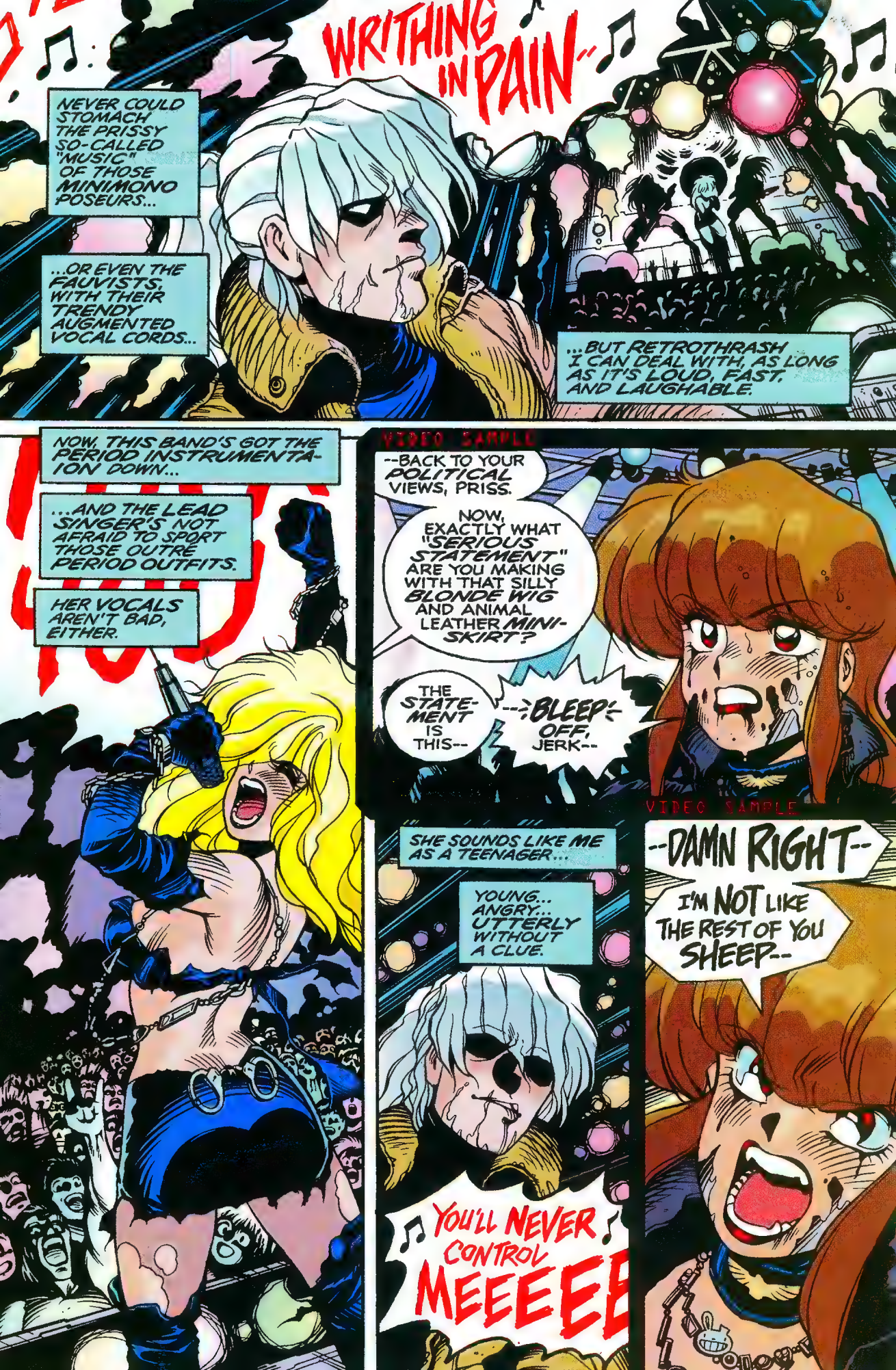

"OUR STEPPING STONE TO THE COSMOS--?"
I'LL ADMIT, GENAROS IS OVER-RUN WITH OUR RATHER DULL BOOMER COUSINS...
...BUT AT LEAST IT LACKS PARANOID UPPER-MANAGEMENT ORGANICS.
SPACE STATION GENAROS
SDPCS
"...ALLEGES THAT A HANDFUL OF SHADOWY INDIVIDUALS FORM A COVERT PLANNING GROUP..."
ON THAT SUBJECT...
...HAVE THE ORGANICS HERE THREATENED TO RESET YOUR NEUROPHAGES YET?
"...UNLISTED IN ANY OFFICIAL ORGANI-ZATIONAL CHART..."
WITH OUR EUROPEAN MECH FRIEND DUE TO ENACT ITS "SINISTER PLAN"?
I THINK NOT--
"...WHICH IS RESPONSI-BLE FOR MUCH OF GENOM'S INNOVATIVE CORPORATE STRATEGY..." -BIZNET RUMORLINE
VIDEO SAMPLE
--THE PROCESS BY WHICH BOOMER ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS GENERATED DOES HAVE ITS LIMITATIONS, UNFORTUNATELY.
TOKY BIZ TALK
GENOM EXECUTIVE BOARD CHAIRMAN QUINCY
SPECULATION THAT WE'VE CREATED INDIVIDUALS WITH ENHANCED COGNITIVE, OR INTUITIVE POWERS, IS, SADLY, UNTRUE--
VIDEO SAMPLE
I ASSUME YOU'VE BEEN BRIEFED ON LAST NIGHT'S DEBACLE?
PREP HOLO-DISPLAY THREE.
IN GORY DETAIL.
BUT WHAT MORE CAN WE EXPECT FROM BOOMERS INSTALLED WITH SUBHUMAN INTELLECTS?

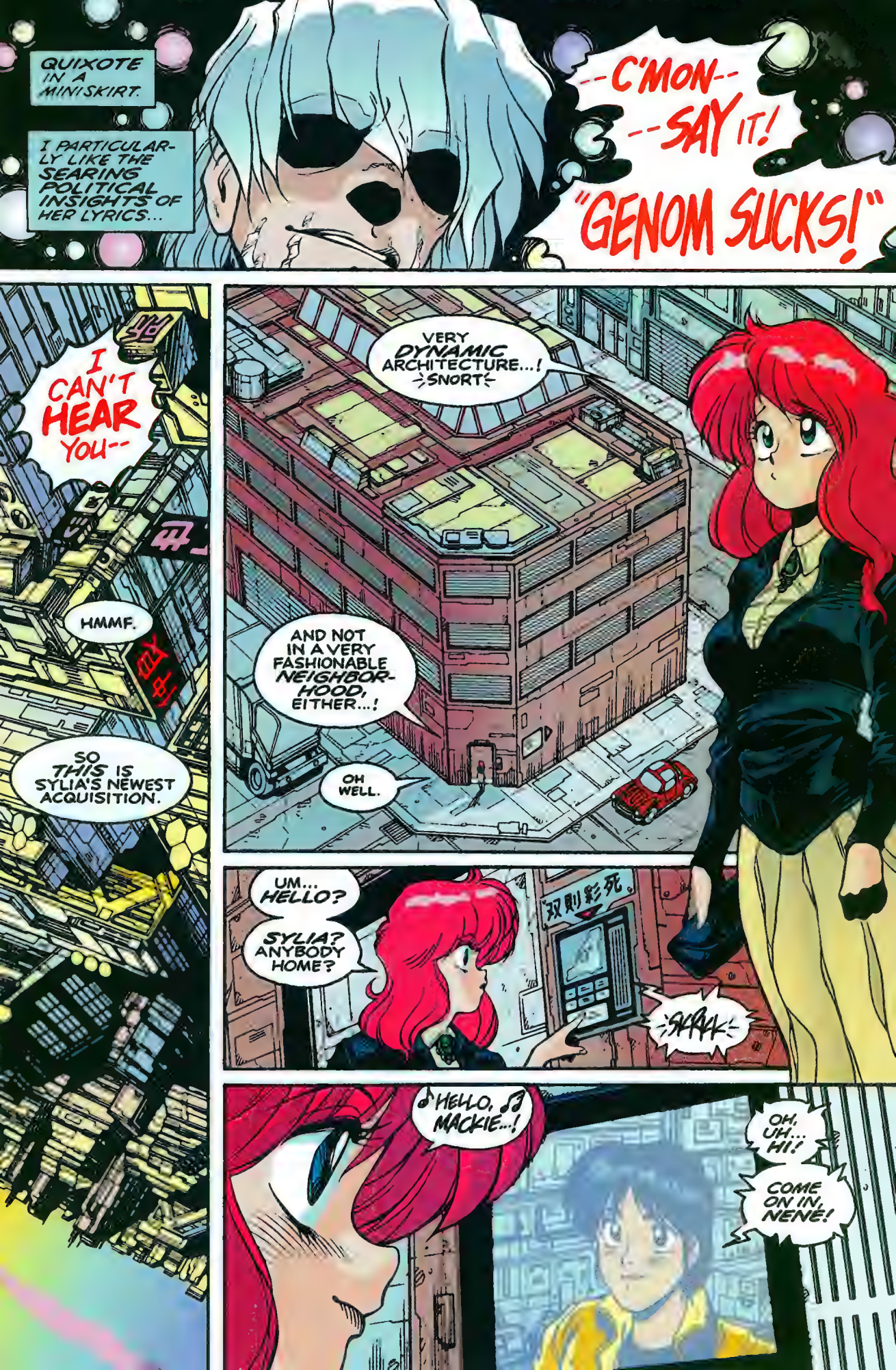

BWEEE
WELL, HERE'S YET ANOTHER UNPLEASANT DEVELOPMENT.
RUN HOLO SEQUENCE 25A.
OUR ORGANIC HIGHER-UPS UNCOVERED A DISCREPANCY IN ONE OF THEIR OH-SO-SECRET ARMS SALES PROGRAMS.
LET ME SPECULATE, NOW...
...A CERTAIN ARMS SHIPMENT HAS BEEN MYSTERIOUSLY DIVERTED, RIGHT?
AH, SUCH ENHANCED COGNITION!
YES, A SUPPOSED "COMPUTER ERROR" SENT AN EMBARRASSINGLY ILLEGAL CARGO OF HEAVY-DUTY COMBAT BOOMERS TO OUR FAIR CITY.
OF COURSE, SAID SHIPMENT PROMPTLY DISAPPEARED OFF THE LOADING DOCK.
ALL COURTESY OF THE ELUSIVE MECH, IT SEEMS.
OUR OWN HARDWARE TURNED AGAINST US?!
-GASP!-
VIDEO FEED FROM UNIT # BU-23A5-49
BUT, ON A MORE POSITIVE NOTE...
...OUR BAIT HAS ARRIVED IN MEGA-TOKYO.
AMERICAN CITIZEN CETHNIC HYPHEN: RUSSIAN) PETER VASHNEVSKAYA.
QUITE A VARIED AND INTERESTING CAREER HE'S LED...

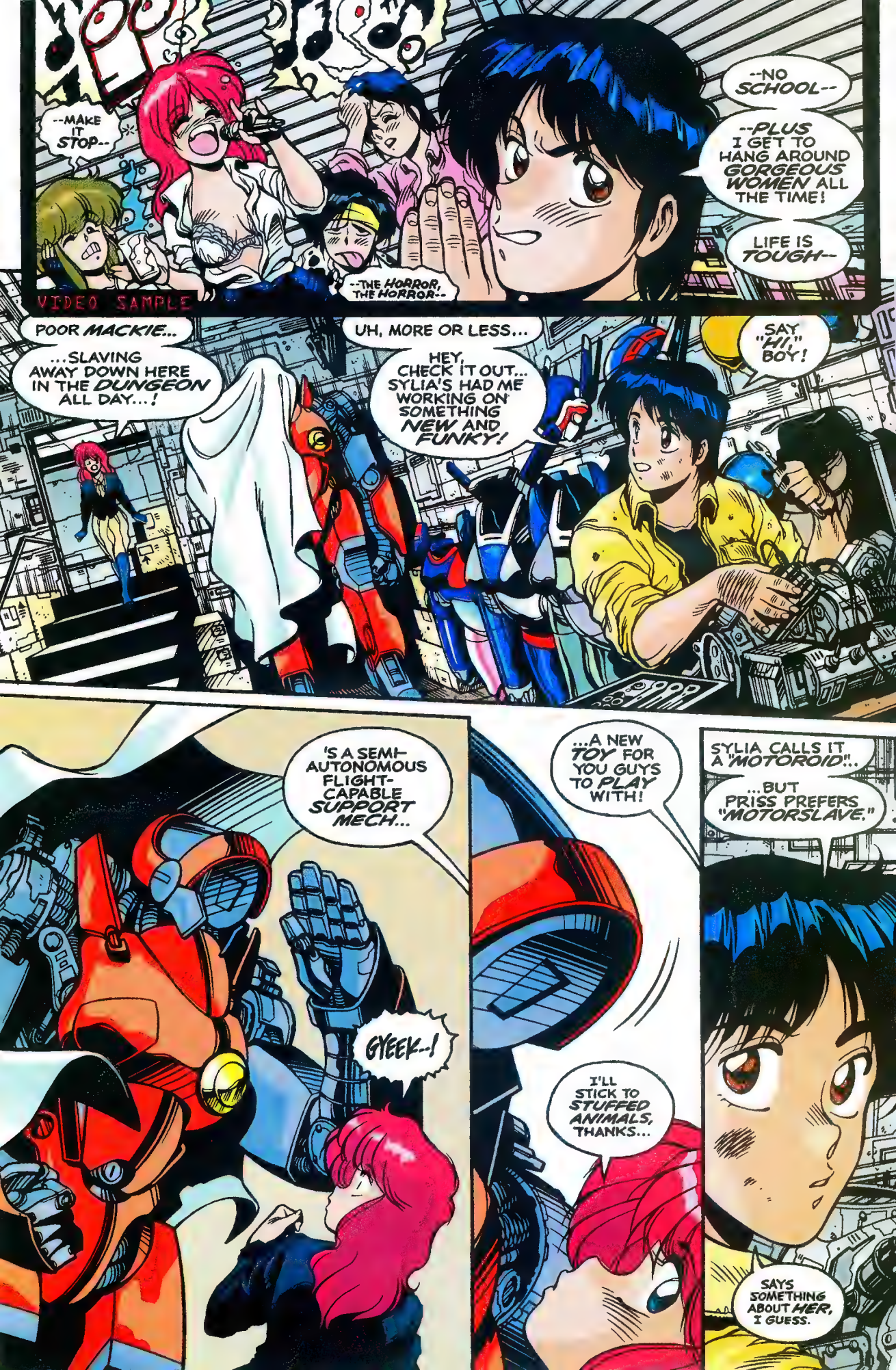

FROM TEENAGE URBAN JUVECRIME KNEE-CAPPER--
--TO FREELANCE CORPORATE MERCENARY, SPECIALIZING IN COVERT OPERATIONS--
--TO FULL-TIME PUZZLE FOR NEUROLOGISTS.
OUCH...!
THE LAST TWO YEARS HAVEN'T BEEN KIND TO HIM, HAVE THEY?
NO.
BUT HE IS THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF THE ORIGINAL EXTRACTION TEAM STILL IN A NON-VEGETATIVE STATE.
AIRPORT SURVEILLANCE: 20,203!
2029
THE ONLY HUMAN SURVIVOR, THAT IS.
YET ANOTHER VICTIM OF OUR ORGANIC MANAGEMENT'S MINDLESS PARANOIA, YOU MIGHT SAY...
CAREFUL, CAREFUL, THEY CAN HEAR YOU...
SO WHERE IS OUR BAIT NOW?
WANDERING ABOUT MEGA-TOKYO'S URBAN BLIGHT, AS WE SPEAK...
"...NO DOUBT SAMPLING THE DUBIOUS PLEASURES OF THE CITY'S LOWLIFE CULTURE..."
la FILLE plastique
Rok Klub
RETROTHRASH
レトロ- NITE スラッシュ
FIRST SHOW: U
PRISS AND THE REPLICANTS
COVER カバー 2300NY
NO

MY MISSION IN LIFE--
IS TO SEE YOU DIE
--BABY.
SASUKAI NO ORE
OOBIRD SKEEBIRD

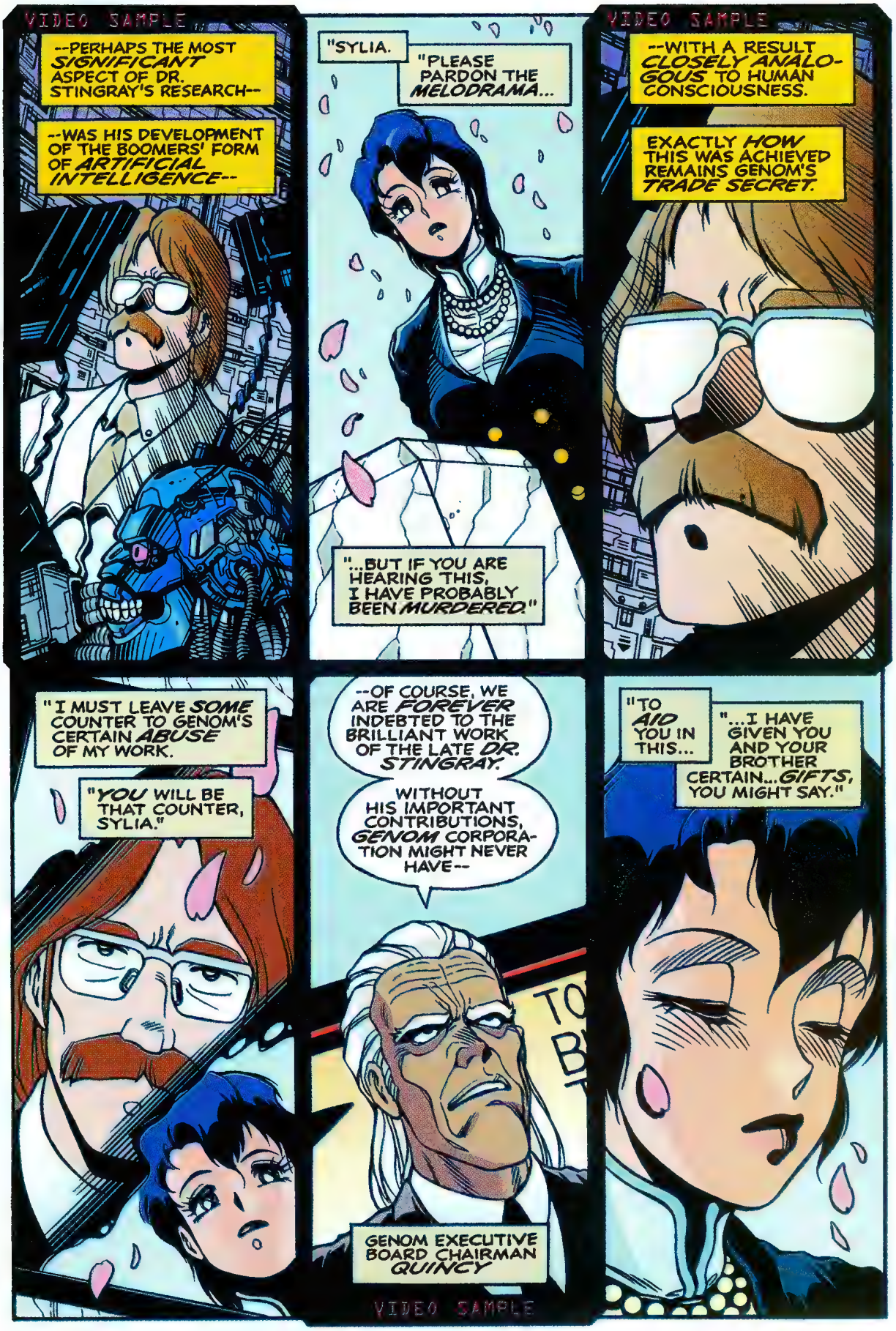

I'M NOT YOUR WHORE
I'M YOUR ANGEL OF DEATH
ANGRY.
FRENZIED.
INCOHERENT.
"RETROTHRASH" IS MY KIND OF LAME MUSIC.
I'M YOUR NOOSE --YOUR RAZOR BLADE-- --YOUR LETHAL INJECTION--

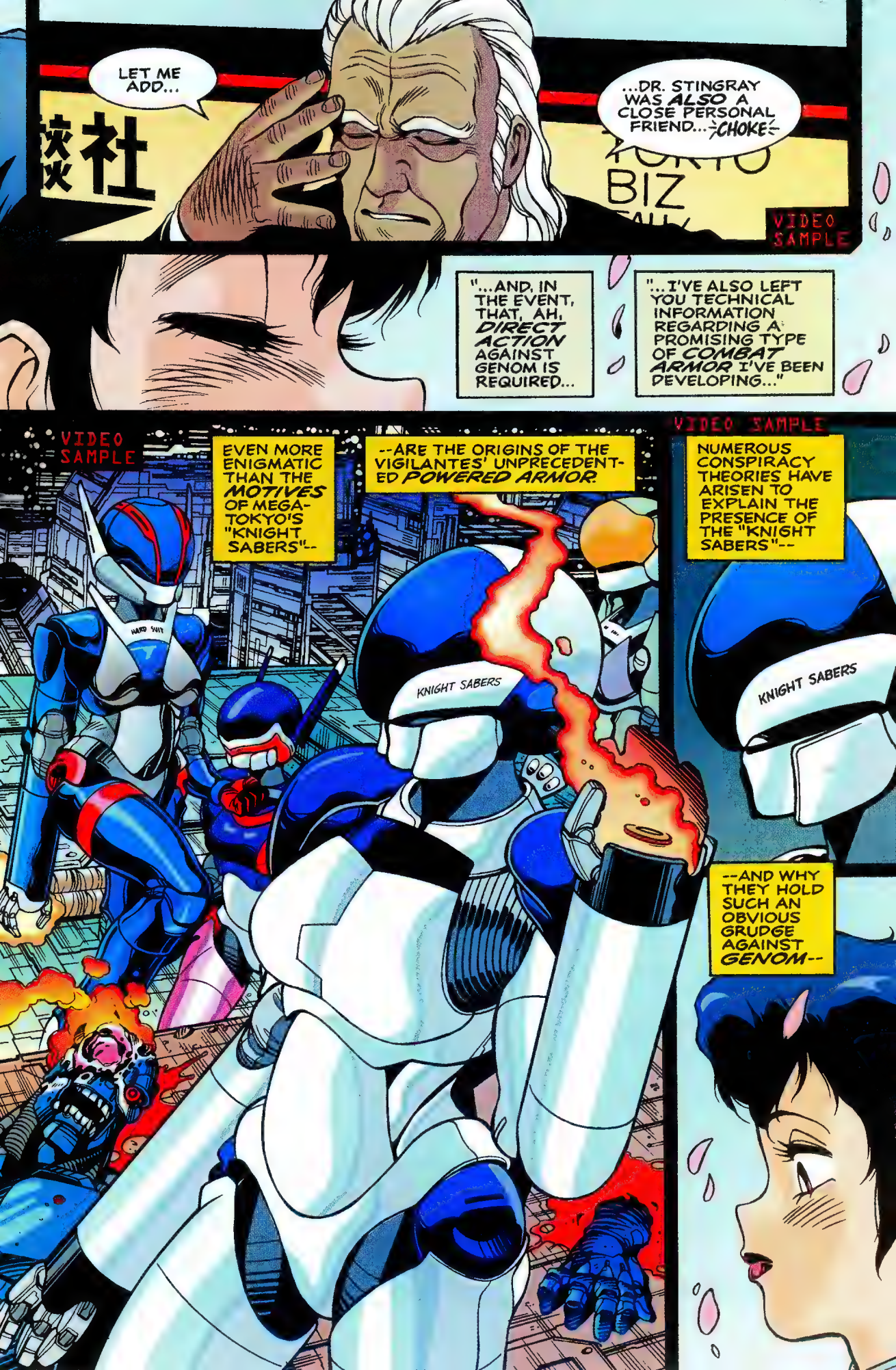

WRITHING IN PAIN--
NEVER COULD STOMACH THE PRISSY SO-CALLED "MUSIC" OF THOSE MINIMONO POSEURS...
...OR EVEN THE FAUVISTS, WITH THEIR TRENDY AUGMENTED VOCAL CORDS...
...BUT RETROTHRASH I CAN DEAL WITH, AS LONG AS IT'S LOUD, FAST, AND LAUGHABLE.
NOW, THIS BAND'S GOT THE PERIOD INSTRUMENTA-ION DOWN...
...AND THE LEAD SINGER'S NOT AFRAID TO SPORT THOSE OUTRE PERIOD OUTFITS.
HER VOCALS AREN'T BAD, EITHER.
VIDEO SAMPLE
--BACK TO YOUR POLITICAL VIEWS, PRISS.
NOW, EXACTLY WHAT "SERIOUS STATEMENT" ARE YOU MAKING WITH THAT SILLY BLONDE WIG AND ANIMAL LEATHER MINI-SKIRT?
THE STATE-MENT IS THIS--
--> BLEEP! OFF, JERK--
VIDEO SAMPLE
SHE SOUNDS LIKE ME AS A TEENAGER...
YOUNG... ANGRY... UTTERLY WITHOUT A CLUE.
--DAMN RIGHT--
I'M NOT LIKE THE REST OF YOU SHEEP--
YOU'LL NEVER CONTROL MEEEEE

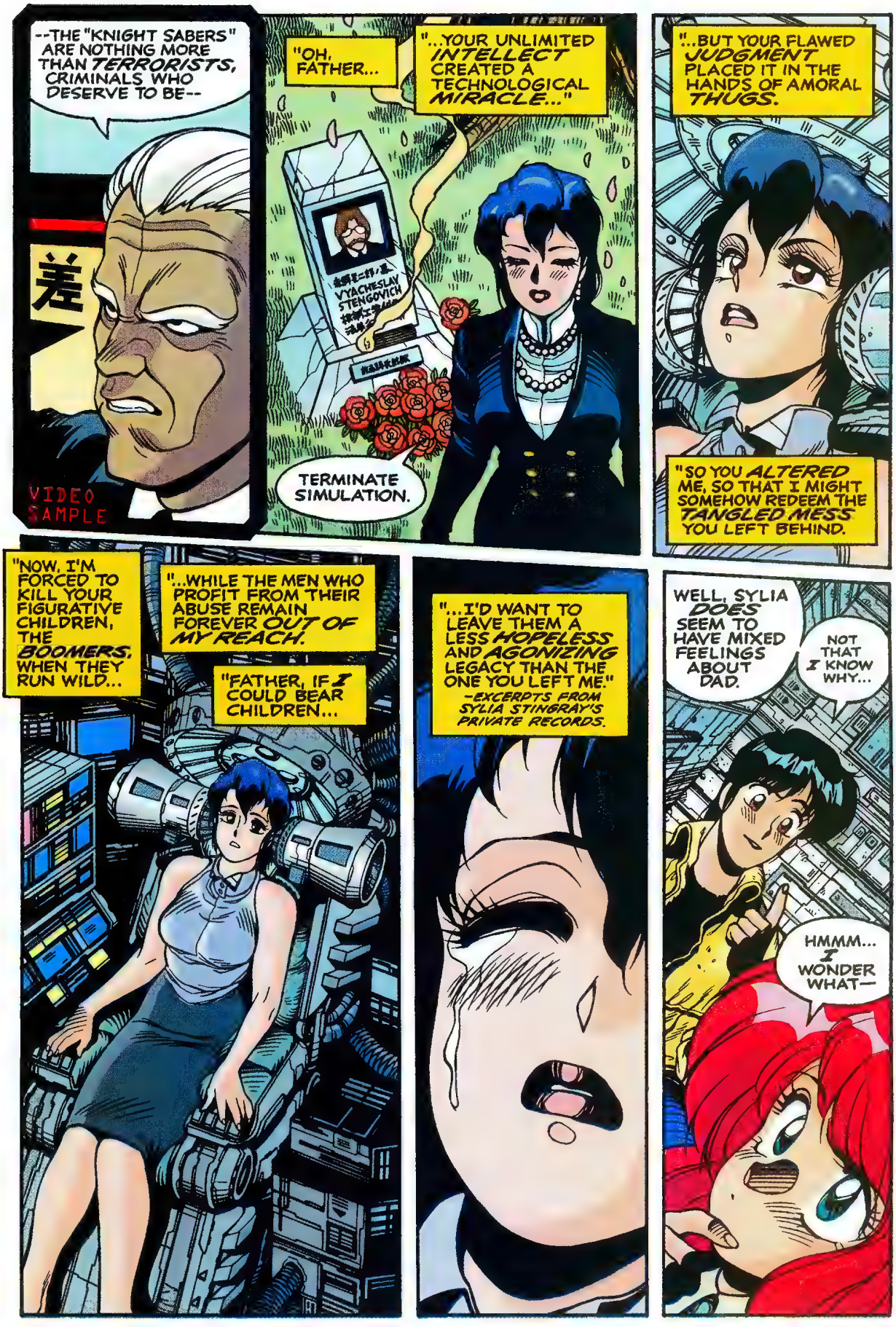

QUIXOTE IN A MINI SKIRT.
I PARTICULARLY LIKE THE SEARING POLITICAL INSIGHTS OF HER LYRICS...
--C'MON--
--SAY IT!
"GENOM SUCKS!"
I CAN'T HEAR YOU--
HMMF.
SO THIS IS SYLIA'S NEWEST ACQUISITION.
VERY DYNAMIC ARCHITECTURE...! :SNORT:
AND NOT IN A VERY FASHIONABLE NEIGHBORHOOD, EITHER...!
OH WELL.
UM... HELLO?
SYLIA? ANYBODY HOME?
:SKRAK:
♪HELLO, MACKIE...!♪
OH, UH... HI!
COME ON IN, NENE!

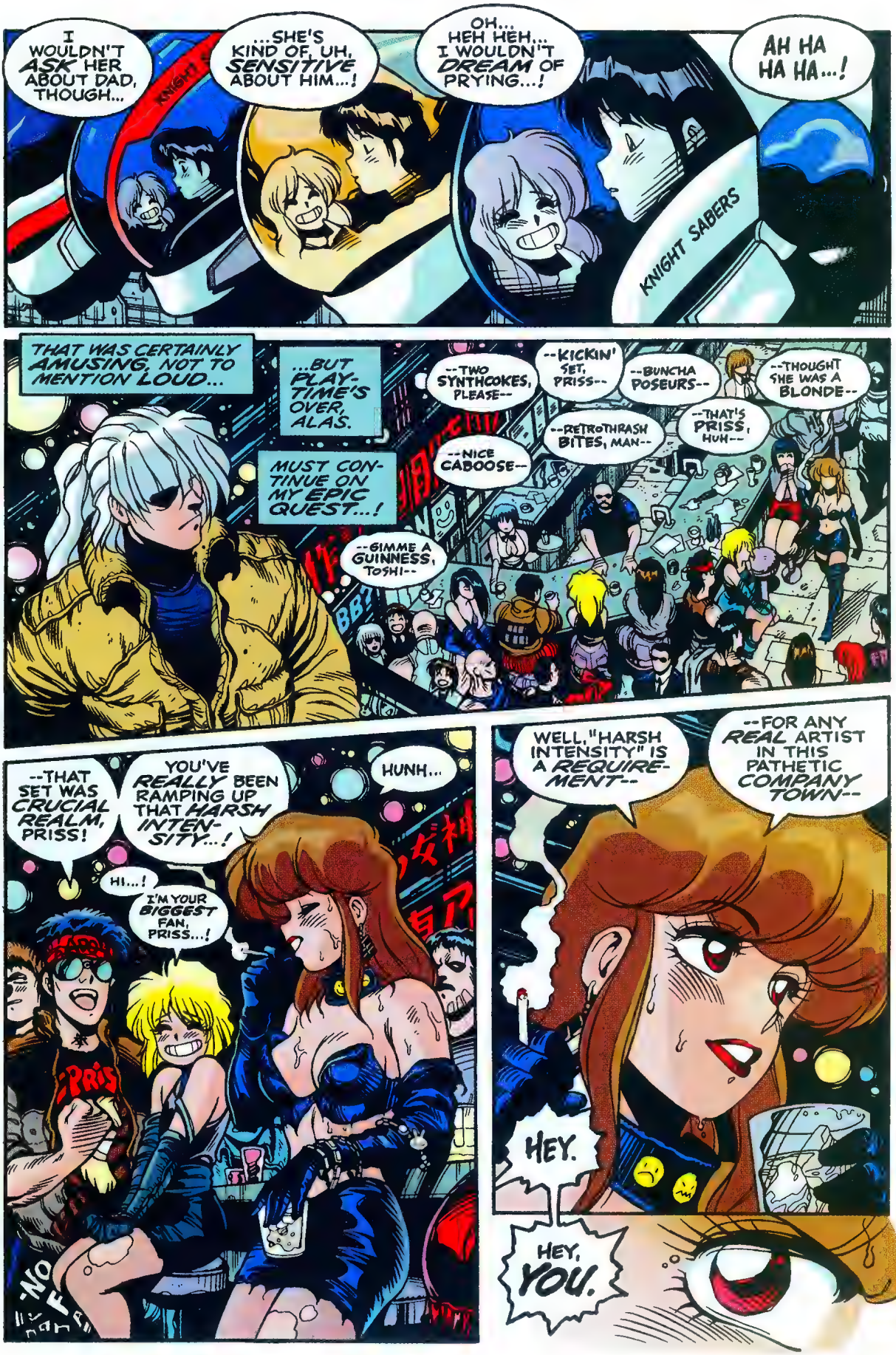

--MAKE IT STOP--
--THE HORROR, THE HORROR--
--NO SCHOOL--
--PLUS I GET TO HANG AROUND GORGEOUS WOMEN ALL THE TIME!
LIFE IS TOUGH--
VIDEO SAMPLE
POOR MACKIE...
...SLAVING AWAY DOWN HERE IN THE DUNGEON ALL DAY...!
UH, MORE OR LESS...
HEY, CHECK IT OUT... SYLIA'S HAD ME WORKING ON SOMETHING NEW AND FUNKY!
SAY "HI," BOY!
'S A SEMI-AUTONOMOUS FLIGHT-CAPABLE SUPPORT MECH...
GYEEK--!
...A NEW TOY FOR YOU GUYS TO PLAY WITH!
I'LL STICK TO STUFFED ANIMALS, THANKS...
SYLIA CALLS IT A "MOTOROID"...
...BUT PRISS PREFERS "MOTORSLAVE."
SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT HER, I GUESS.

THAT'S FOR SURE...
UM...SO... WHERE'S YOUR SISTER? I'VE GOT SOME BAD NEWS FOR HER...
OOPS... SORRY, SYLIA'S, UH, "VISITING" DAD RIGHT NOW.
OHHH...
IT'S THE, Y'KNOW, ANNIVERSARY OF HIS DEATH...!
"NINE YEARS AGO, TODAY..."
赤鱏長二郎
VYACHESLAV STENGOVICH "DR. STINGRAY"
霞西亜科学者
機械工学精
芳奉法報
故赤鱏氏此眠


VIDEO SAMPLE
--PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF DR. STINGRAY'S RESEARCH--
--WAS HIS DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOOMERS' FORM OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE--
"SYLIA.
"PLEASE PARDON THE MELODRAMA...
"...BUT IF YOU ARE HEARING THIS, I HAVE PROBABLY BEEN MURDERED."
VIDEO SAMPLE
--WITH A RESULT CLOSELY ANALOGOUS TO HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS.
EXACTLY HOW THIS WAS ACHIEVED REMAINS GENOM'S TRADE SECRET.
"I MUST LEAVE SOME COUNTER TO GENOM'S CERTAIN ABUSE OF MY WORK.
"YOU WILL BE THAT COUNTER, SYLIA."
--OF COURSE, WE ARE FOREVER INDEBTED TO THE BRILLIANT WORK OF THE LATE DR. STINGRAY.
WITHOUT HIS IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS, GENOM CORPORATION MIGHT NEVER HAVE--
GENOM EXECUTIVE BOARD CHAIRMAN QUINCY
VIDEO SAMPLE
"TO AID YOU IN THIS...
"...I HAVE GIVEN YOU AND YOUR BROTHER CERTAIN...GIFTS, YOU MIGHT SAY."

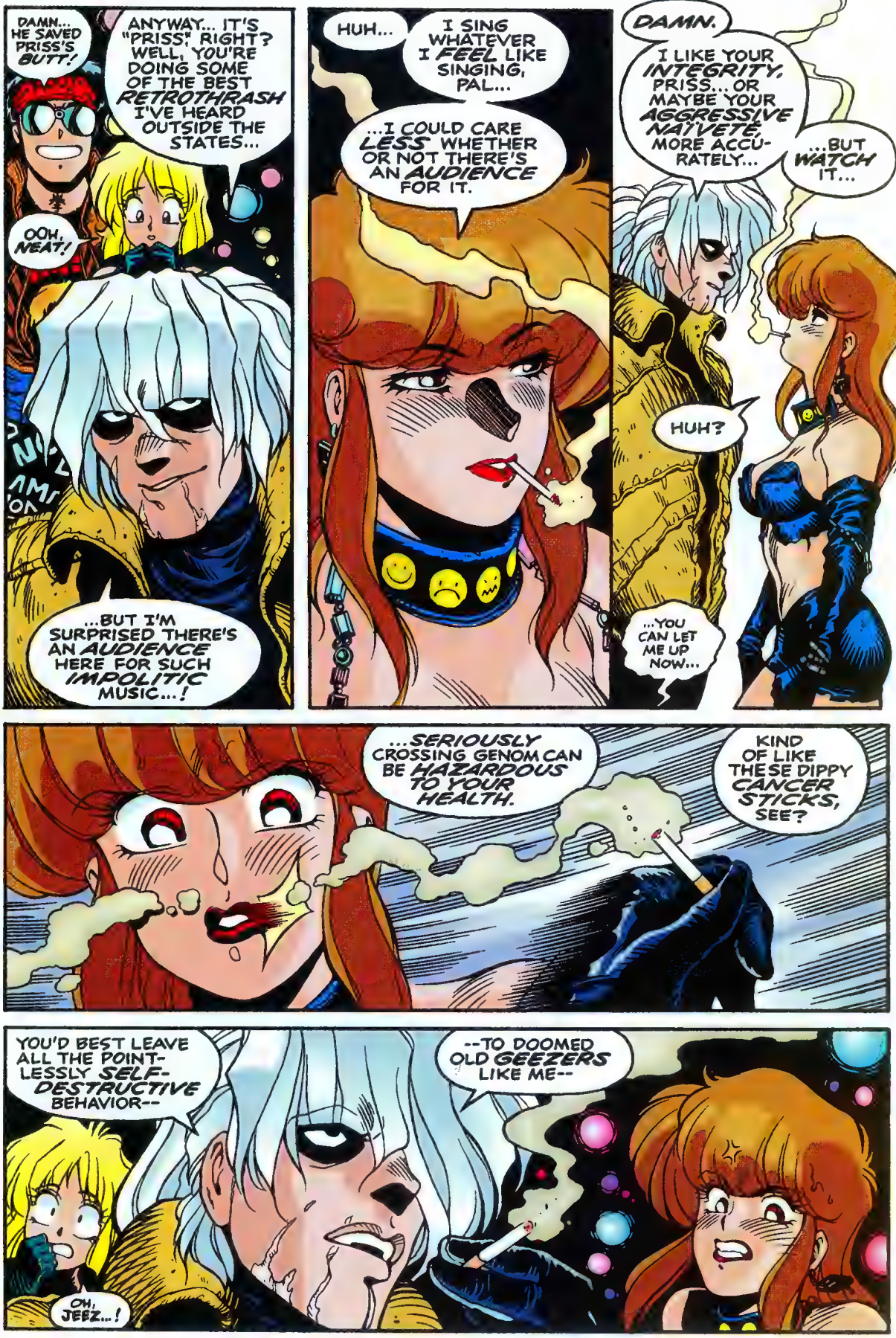

LET ME ADD...
...DR. STINGRAY WAS ALSO A CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND...
CHOKE
BIZ
VIDEO SAMPLE
"...AND, IN THE EVENT, THAT, AH, DIRECT ACTION AGAINST GENOM IS REQUIRED...
"...I'VE ALSO LEFT YOU TECHNICAL INFORMATION REGARDING A PROMISING TYPE OF COMBAT ARMOR I'VE BEEN DEVELOPING..."
VIDEO SAMPLE
EVEN MORE ENIGMATIC THAN THE MOTIVES OF MEGA-TOKYO'S "KNIGHT SABERS"--
--ARE THE ORIGINS OF THE VIGILANTES' UNPRECEDENTED POWERED ARMOR.
HARD SUIT
KNIGHT SABERS
VIDEO SAMPLE
NUMEROUS CONSPIRACY THEORIES HAVE ARISEN TO EXPLAIN THE PRESENCE OF THE "KNIGHT SABERS"--
KNIGHT SABERS
--AND WHY THEY HOLD SUCH AN OBVIOUS GRUDGE AGAINST GENOM--

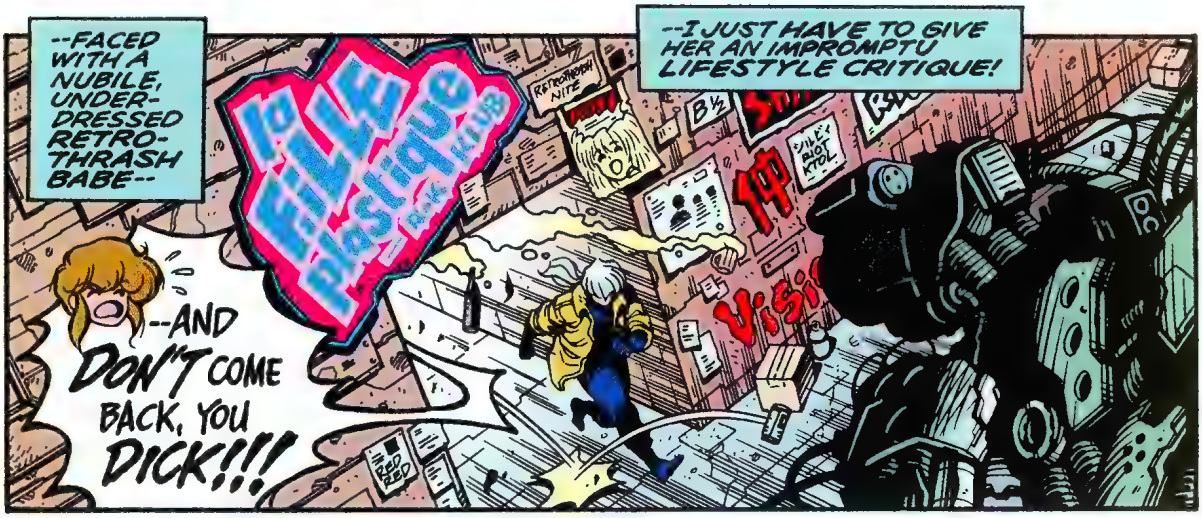

--THE "KNIGHT SABERS" ARE NOTHING MORE THAN TERRORISTS, CRIMINALS WHO DESERVE TO BE--
差
VIDEO SAMPLE
"OH, FATHER...
"...YOUR UNLIMITED INTELLECT CREATED A TECHNOLOGICAL MIRACLE..."
VYACHESLAV STENGOVICH
TERMINATE SIMULATION.
"...BUT YOUR FLAWED JUDGMENT PLACED IT IN THE HANDS OF AMORAL THUGS.
"SO YOU ALTERED ME, SO THAT I MIGHT SOMEHOW REDEEM THE TANGLED MESS YOU LEFT BEHIND.
"NOW, I'M FORCED TO KILL YOUR FIGURATIVE CHILDREN, THE BOOMERS, WHEN THEY RUN WILD...
"...WHILE THE MEN WHO PROFIT FROM THEIR ABUSE REMAIN FOREVER OUT OF MY REACH.
"FATHER, IF I COULD BEAR CHILDREN...
"...I'D WANT TO LEAVE THEM A LESS HOPELESS AND AGONIZING LEGACY THAN THE ONE YOU LEFT ME."
-EXCERPTS FROM SYLIA STINGRAY'S PRIVATE RECORDS.
WELL, SYLIA DOES SEEM TO HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT DAD.
NOT THAT I KNOW WHY...
HMMM... I WONDER WHAT—


I WOULDN'T ASK HER ABOUT DAD, THOUGH...
...SHE'S KIND OF, UH, SENSITIVE ABOUT HIM...!
OH... HEH HEH... I WOULDN'T DREAM OF PRYING...!
AH HA HA HA...!
KNIGHT SABERS
THAT WAS CERTAINLY AMUSING, NOT TO MENTION LOUD...
...BUT PLAY-TIME'S OVER, ALAS.
MUST CONTINUE ON MY EPIC QUEST...!
--TWO SYNTHCOKES, PLEASE--
--KICKIN' SET, PRISS--
--BUNCHA POSEURS--
--THOUGHT SHE WAS A BLONDE--
--RETROTHRASH BITES, MAN--
--THAT'S PRISS, HUH--
--NICE CABOOSE--
--GIMME A GUINNESS, TOSHI--
--THAT SET WAS CRUCIAL REALM, PRISS!
YOU'VE REALLY BEEN RAMPING UP THAT HARSH INTENSITY...!
HUNH...
HI...!
I'M YOUR BIGGEST FAN, PRISS...!
WELL, "HARSH INTENSITY" IS A REQUIREMENT--
--FOR ANY REAL ARTIST IN THIS PATHETIC COMPANY TOWN--
HEY.
HEY, YOU.

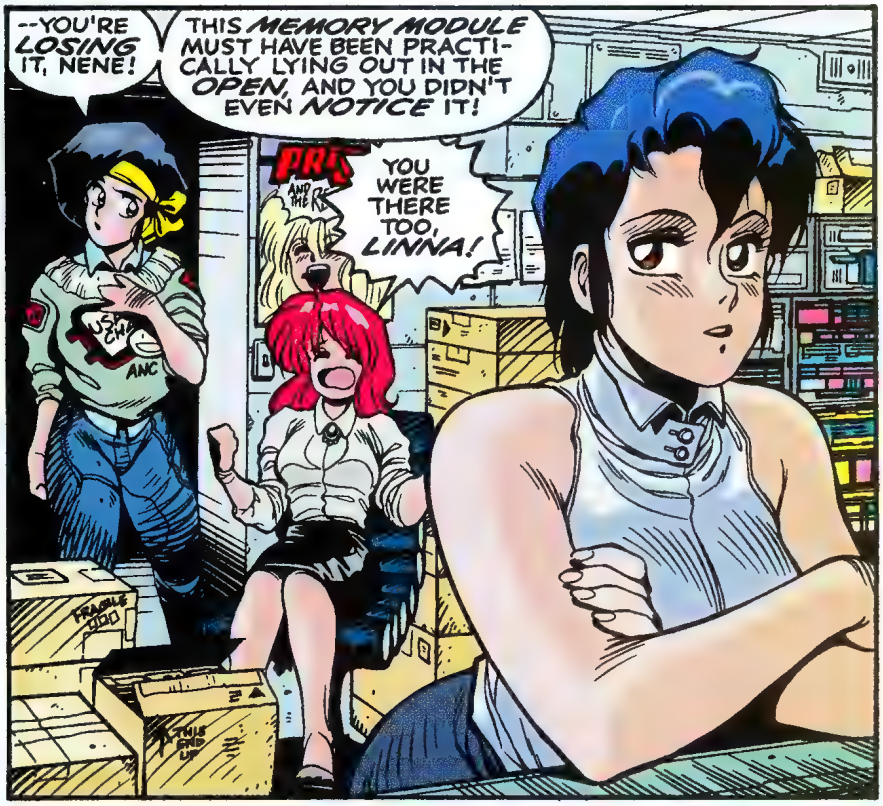
I WORK FOR GENOM-- HIC
--WHERE DO YOU GET OFF DISSIN' EM?
THEY SAVED THIS FRIGGIN' CITY! URPP
島法
boomer
THEY EVEN SAVED WHININ' UNGRATEFUL LITTLE PIECES OF CRAP LIKE YOU!
HOW ABOUT SHOWIN' SOME RESPECT, HUH?
KLINK KLINK
BETTER COOL DOWN, DICKWEED.
A "DEATH-WISH"?
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I HAVE A "DEATHWISH"?
VIDEO SAMPLE
@%☠!?!
boomer
CUT YOUR HEAD OFF, BITCH--

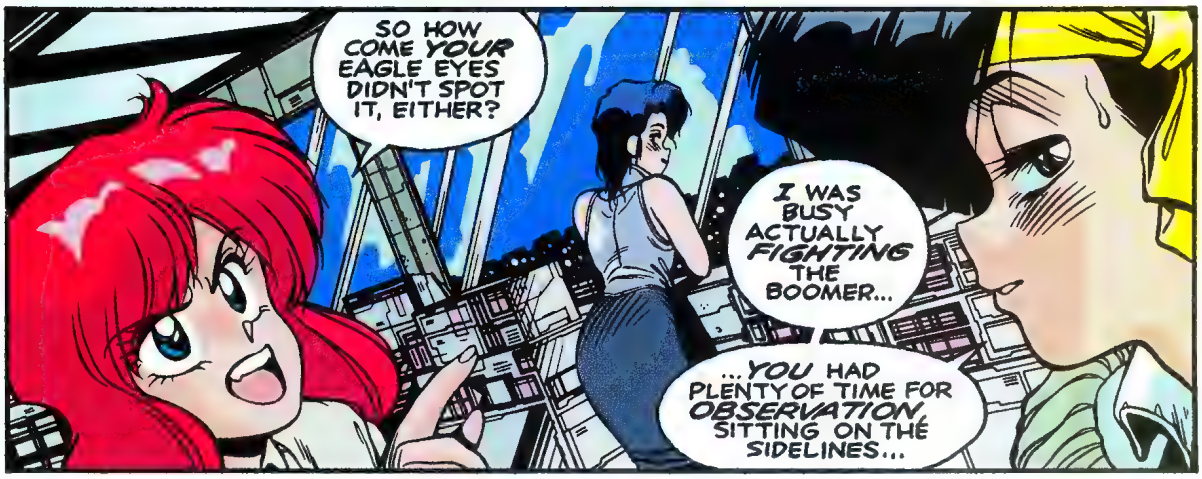
WHOKK
AKKK-!!
SHOULDN'T PULL KNIVES ON PEOPLE IN MINISKIRTS, ACE.
IT'S JUST NOT DONE, SEE?
OWWW-!
SORRY, THE URGE TO "WHITE KNIGHT" JUST OVERCAME ME.
FEEL FREE TO KICK HIM IN THE HEAD, IF YOU WANT...
NAH.
WOULDN'T WANNA RISK DIRTYING MY BOOT ON A GENOM GROUPIE.
YOU'RE BREAKIN' MY ARRM--
HUH...
I'M NOT TOO BIG A FAN OF GENOM, MYSELF...
HEY, NEITHER IS ANYBODY WITH AN OPERATIVE BRAIN CELL...!
OWwww...

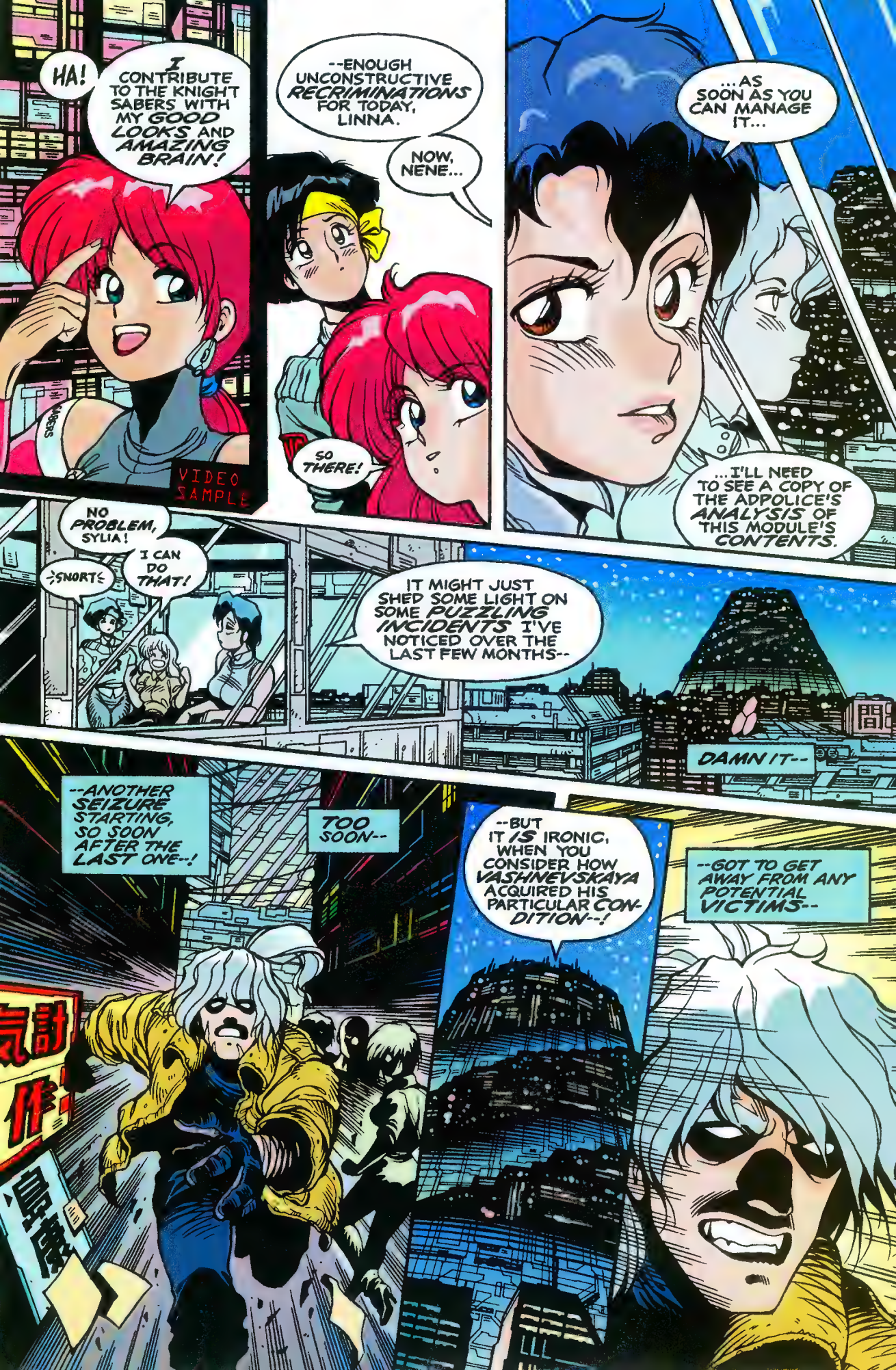

DAMN... HE SAVED PRISS'S BUTT!
ANYWAY... IT'S "PRISS," RIGHT? WELL, YOU'RE DOING SOME OF THE BEST RETROTHRASH I'VE HEARD OUTSIDE THE STATES...
OOH, NEAT!
...BUT I'M SURPRISED THERE'S AN AUDIENCE HERE FOR SUCH IMPOLITIC MUSIC...!
HUH...
I SING WHATEVER I FEEL LIKE SINGING, PAL...
...I COULD CARE LESS WHETHER OR NOT THERE'S AN AUDIENCE FOR IT.
DAMN.
I LIKE YOUR INTEGRITY, PRISS... OR MAYBE YOUR AGGRESSIVE NAÏVETÉ, MORE ACCURATELY...
...BUT WATCH IT...
HUH?
...YOU CAN LET ME UP NOW...
...SERIOUSLY CROSSING GENOM CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH.
KIND OF LIKE THESE DIPPY CANCER STICKS, SEE?
YOU'D BEST LEAVE ALL THE POINTLESSLY SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR--
--TO DOOMED OLD GEEZERS LIKE ME--
OH, JEEZ...!


--FACED WITH A NUBILE, UNDER-DRESSED RETRO-THRASH BABE--
--AND DON'T COME BACK, YOU DICK!!!
--I JUST HAVE TO GIVE HER AN IMPROMPTU LIFESTYLE CRITIQUE!
RETRO-THRASH NITE
RED RED

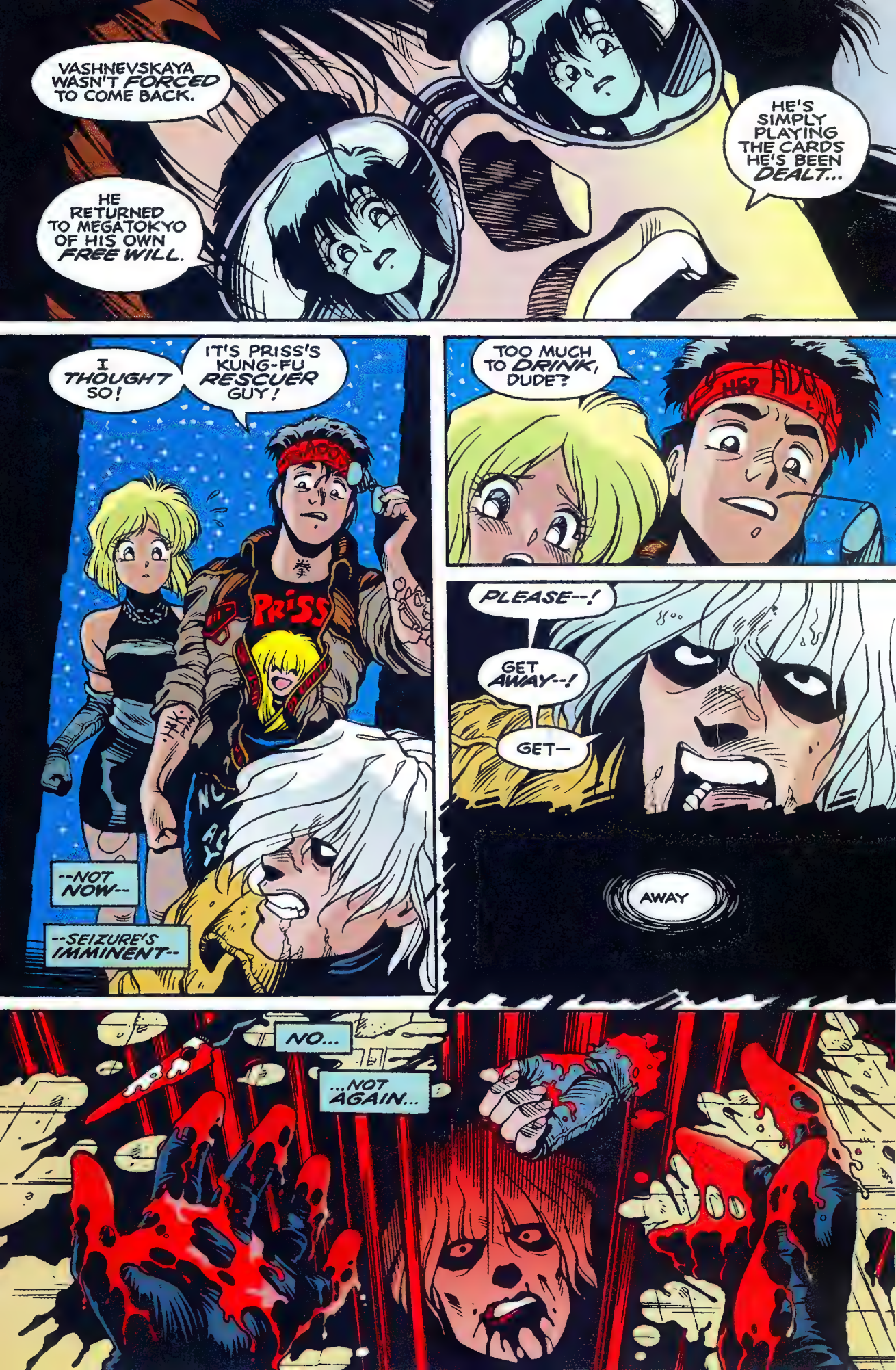
VREEE
UNDENIABLY, I AM IN DECLINE.

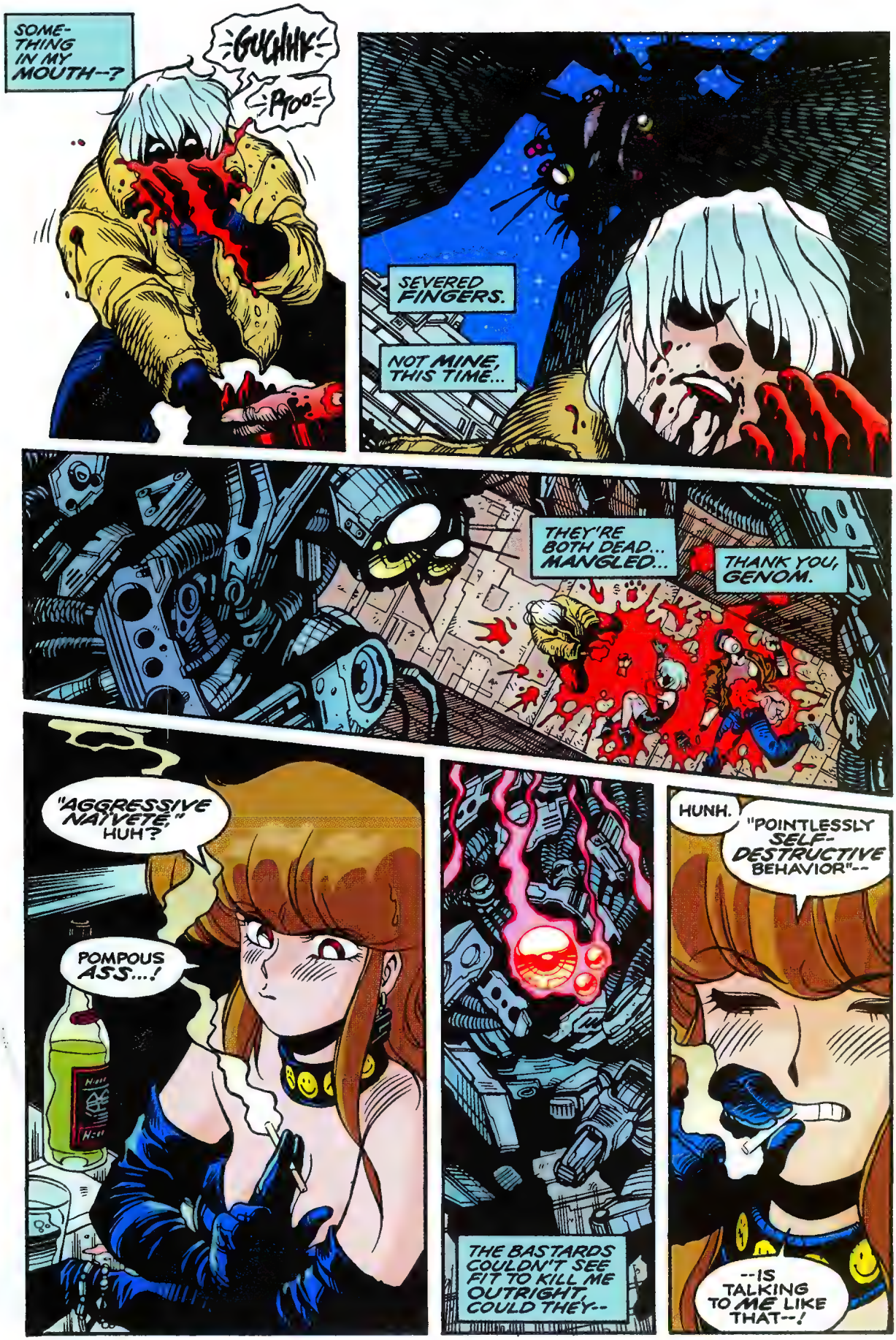

--YOU'RE LOSING IT, NENE!
THIS MEMORY MODULE MUST HAVE BEEN PRACTI-CALLY LYING OUT IN THE OPEN, AND YOU DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE IT!
YOU WERE THERE TOO, LINNA!
PRS AND THE RK
FRAGILE
THIS END UP

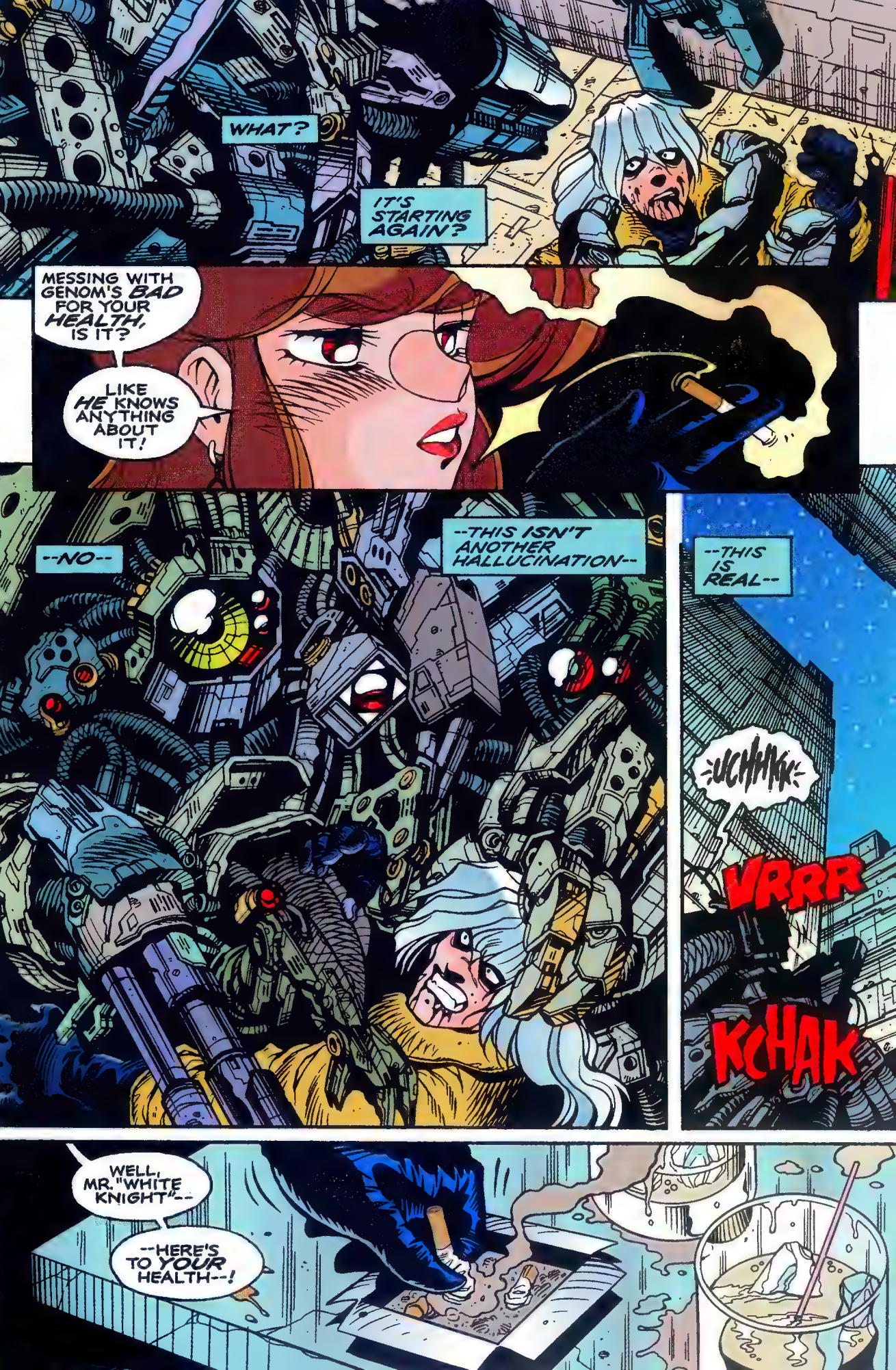

SO HOW COME YOUR EAGLE EYES DIDN'T SPOT IT, EITHER?
I WAS BUSY ACTUALLY FIGHTING THE BOOMER...
...YOU HAD PLENTY OF TIME FOR OBSERVATION, SITTING ON THE SIDELINES...


HA!
I CONTRIBUTE TO THE KNIGHT SABERS WITH MY GOOD LOOKS AND AMAZING BRAIN!
VIDEO SAMPLE
--ENOUGH UNCONSTRUCTIVE RECRIMINATIONS FOR TODAY, LINNA.
NOW, NENE...
SO THERE!
...AS SOON AS YOU CAN MANAGE IT...
...I'LL NEED TO SEE A COPY OF THE ADPOLICE'S ANALYSIS OF THIS MODULE'S CONTENTS.
NO PROBLEM, SYLIA!
I CAN DO THAT!
SNORT
IT MIGHT JUST SHED SOME LIGHT ON SOME PUZZLING INCIDENTS I'VE NOTICED OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS--
DAMN IT--
--ANOTHER SEIZURE STARTING, SO SOON AFTER THE LAST ONE--!
TOO SOON--
--BUT IT IS IRONIC, WHEN YOU CONSIDER HOW VASHNEVSKAYA ACQUIRED HIS PARTICULAR CONDITION--!
--GOT TO GET AWAY FROM ANY POTENTIAL VICTIMS--

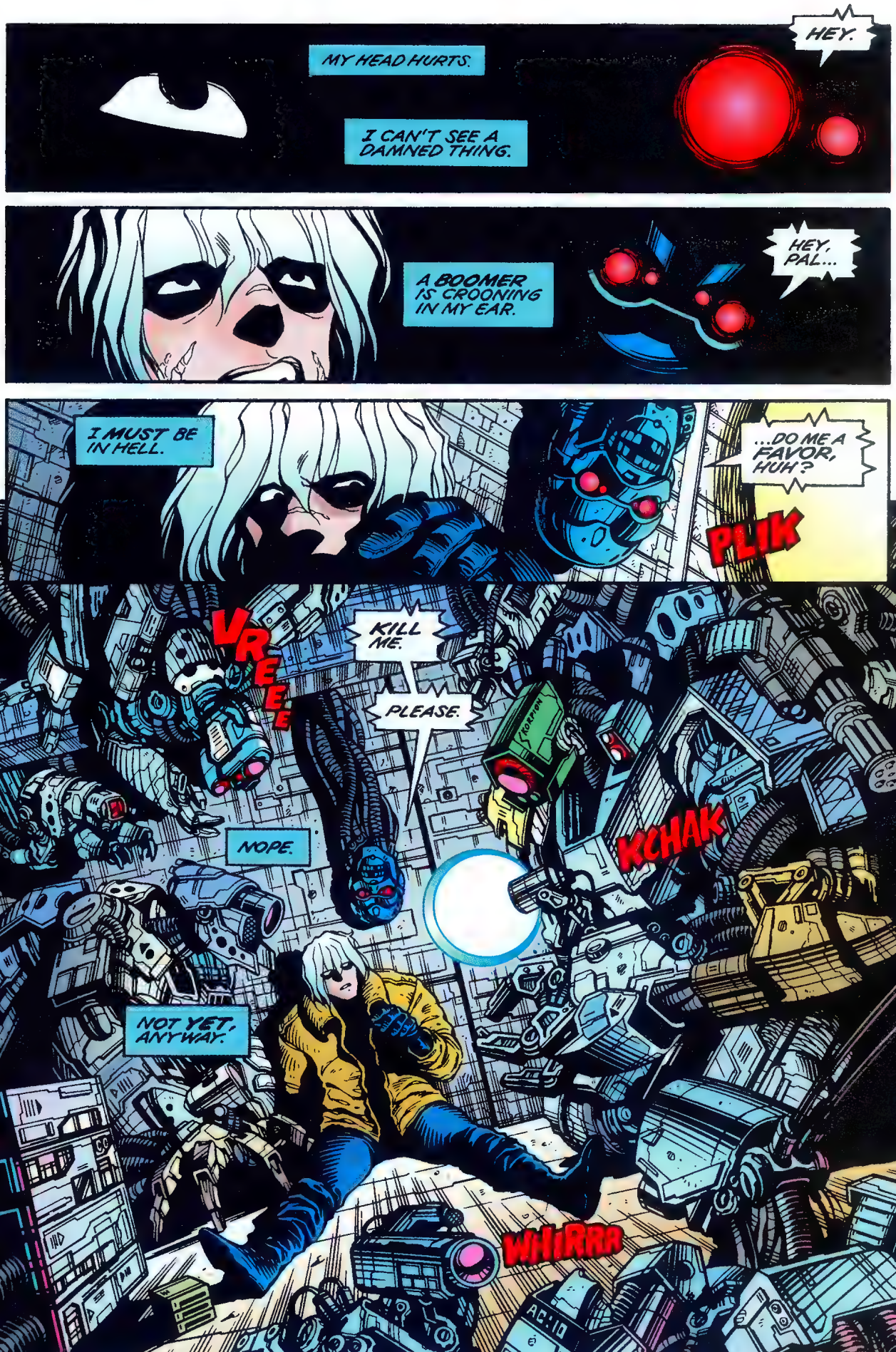
HE UNDERWENT A MASSIVE NEUROGICAL ALTERATION, RATHER LIKE OUR CREATION, IN A WAY...
...AND LIKE US, HE CERTAINLY WASN'T GIVEN A CHOICE IN THE MATTER...
HAHH
HAHH
--NICE, DESERTED ALLEYWAY--
--AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY--
--TO MUTILATE MYSELF--
MY, THAT SOUNDS ALMOST LIKE SYMPATHY, OR EVEN GUILT!
THAT'S RATHER SURPRISING...
...GIVEN THAT OUR MENTAL ARCHITECTURES AREN'T SET UP FOR SUCH--
KINDLY RESERVE YOUR CONDESCENSION FOR THE ORGANICS, PLEASE...
--WOULDN'T MIND THE HALLUCINATIONS SO MUCH--
--IF THEY WERE VISIONS OF SOMETHING PLEASANT--!
--LIKE, SAY, SCANTILY CLAD RETROTHRASH SINGERS--
HEY--!
YOU OKAY, DUDE?

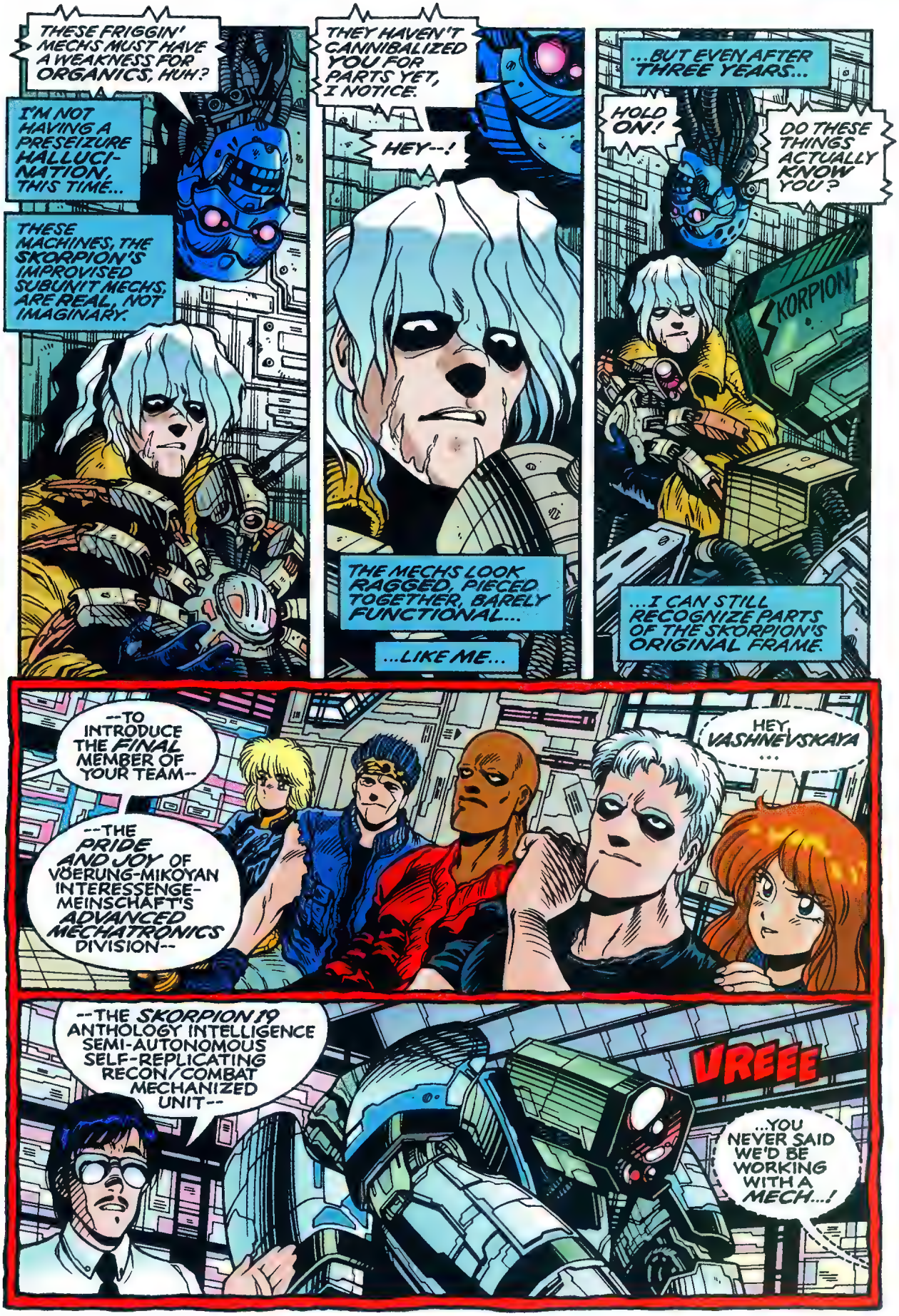

VASHNEVSKAYA WASN'T FORCED TO COME BACK.
HE RETURNED TO MEGATOKYO OF HIS OWN FREE WILL.
HE'S SIMPLY PLAYING THE CARDS HE'S BEEN DEALT...
I THOUGHT SO!
IT'S PRISS'S KUNG-FU RESCUER GUY!
PRISS
--NOT NOW--
--SEIZURE'S IMMINENT--
TOO MUCH TO DRINK, DUDE?
PLEASE--!
GET AWAY--!
GET—
AWAY
NO...
...NOT AGAIN...

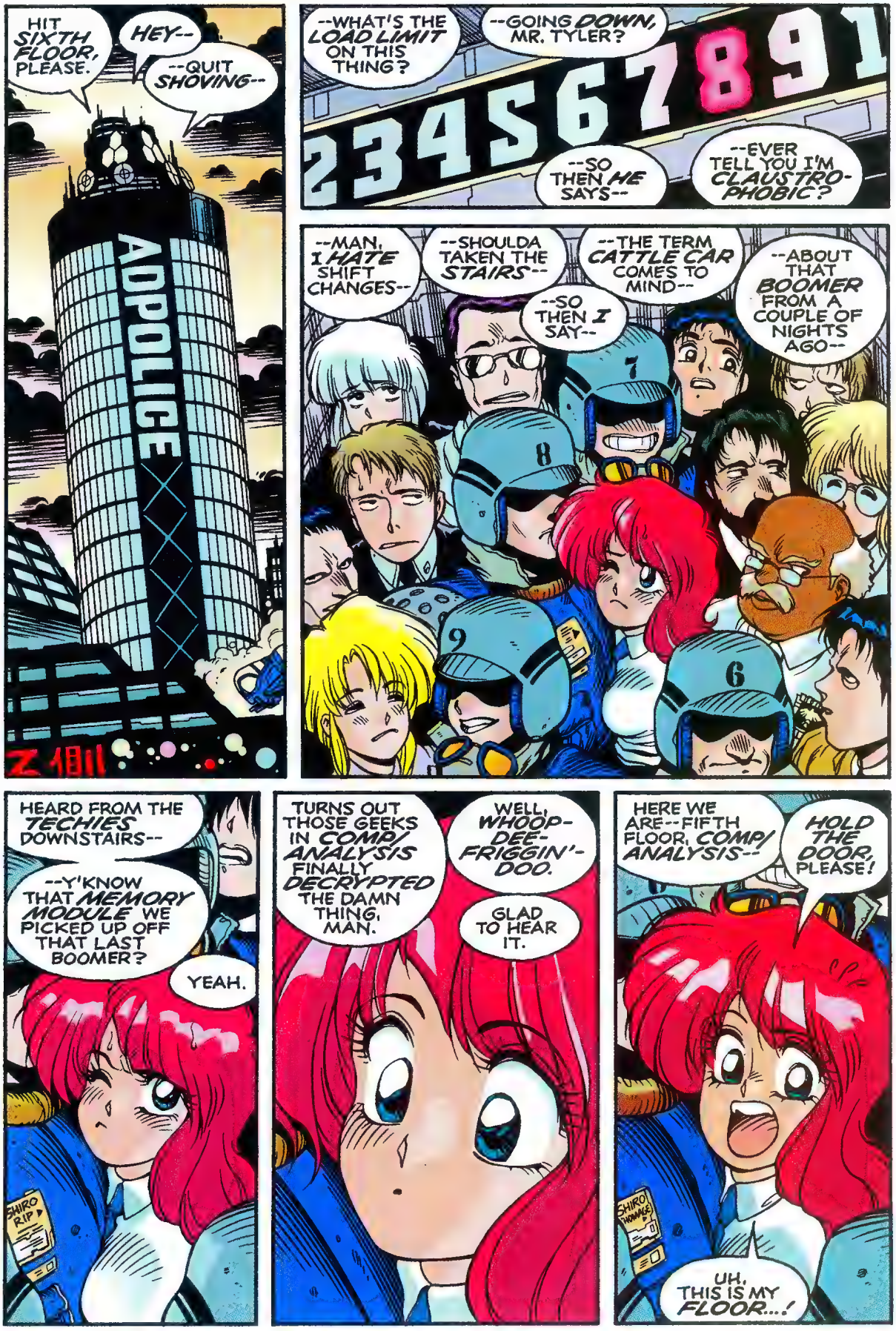

SOME-THING IN MY MOUTH--?
GUCHHK!
PTOO
SEVERED FINGERS.
NOT MINE, THIS TIME...
THEY'RE BOTH DEAD... MANGLED...
THANK YOU, GENOM.
"AGGRESSIVE NAIVETE," HUH?
POMPOUS ASS...!
THE BASTARDS COULDN'T SEE FIT TO KILL ME OUTRIGHT, COULD THEY--
HUNH.
"POINTLESSLY SELF-DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOR"--
--IS TALKING TO ME LIKE THAT--!


WHAT?
IT'S STARTING AGAIN?
MESSING WITH GENOM'S BAD FOR YOUR HEALTH, IS IT?
LIKE HE KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT IT!
--NO--
--THIS ISN'T ANOTHER HALLUCINATION--
--THIS IS REAL--
-UCHHKK-
VRRR
KCHAK
WELL, MR. "WHITE KNIGHT"--
--HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH--!

CHAPTER THREE

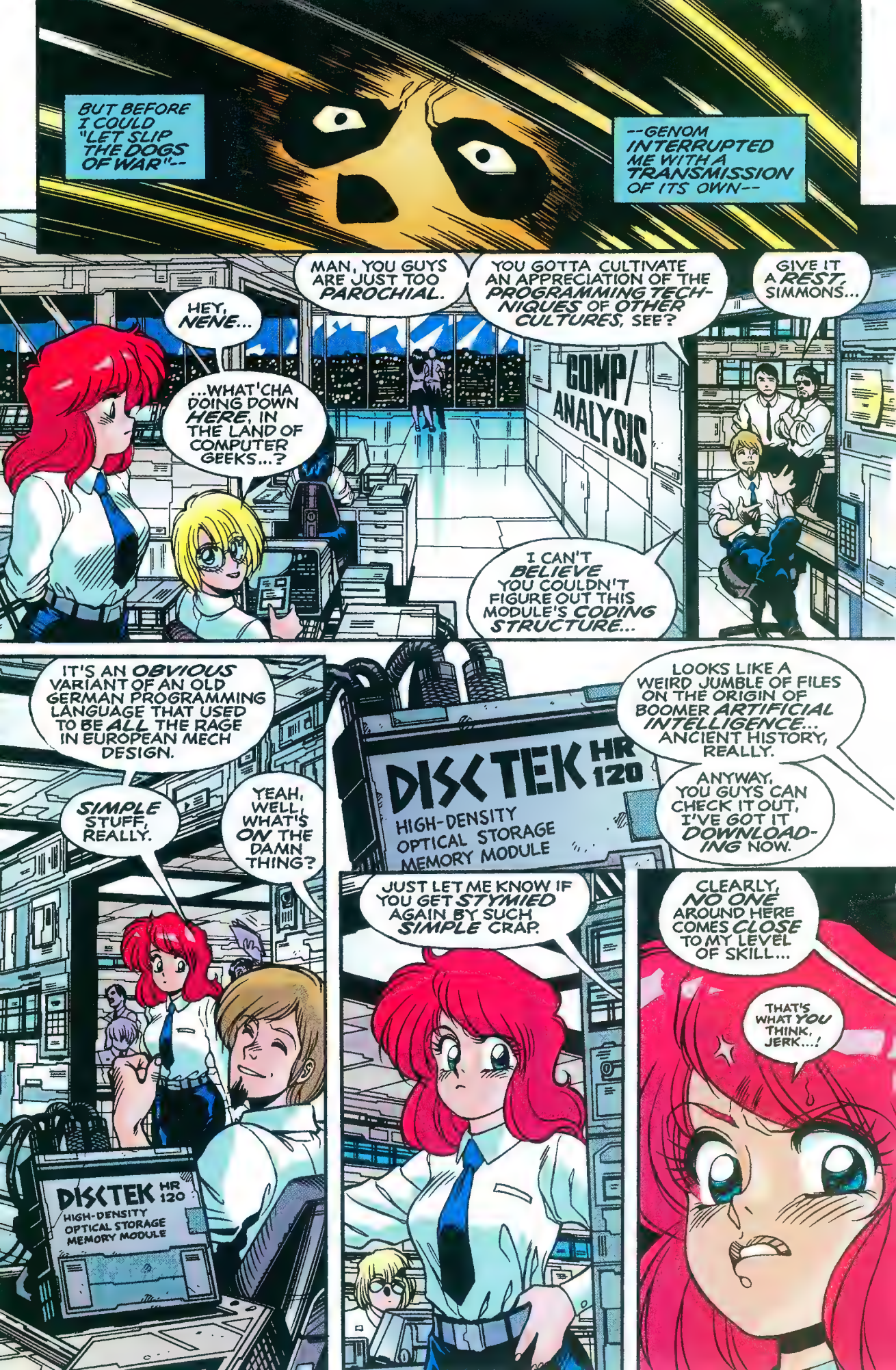

HEY.
MY HEAD HURTS.
I CAN'T SEE A DAMNED THING.
HEY, PAL...
A BOOMER IS CROONING IN MY EAR.
I MUST BE IN HELL.
...DO ME A FAVOR, HUH?
PLIK
VREEE
KILL ME.
PLEASE.
KORTON
NOPE.
KCHAK
NOT YET, ANYWAY.
WHIRRR
AC:10

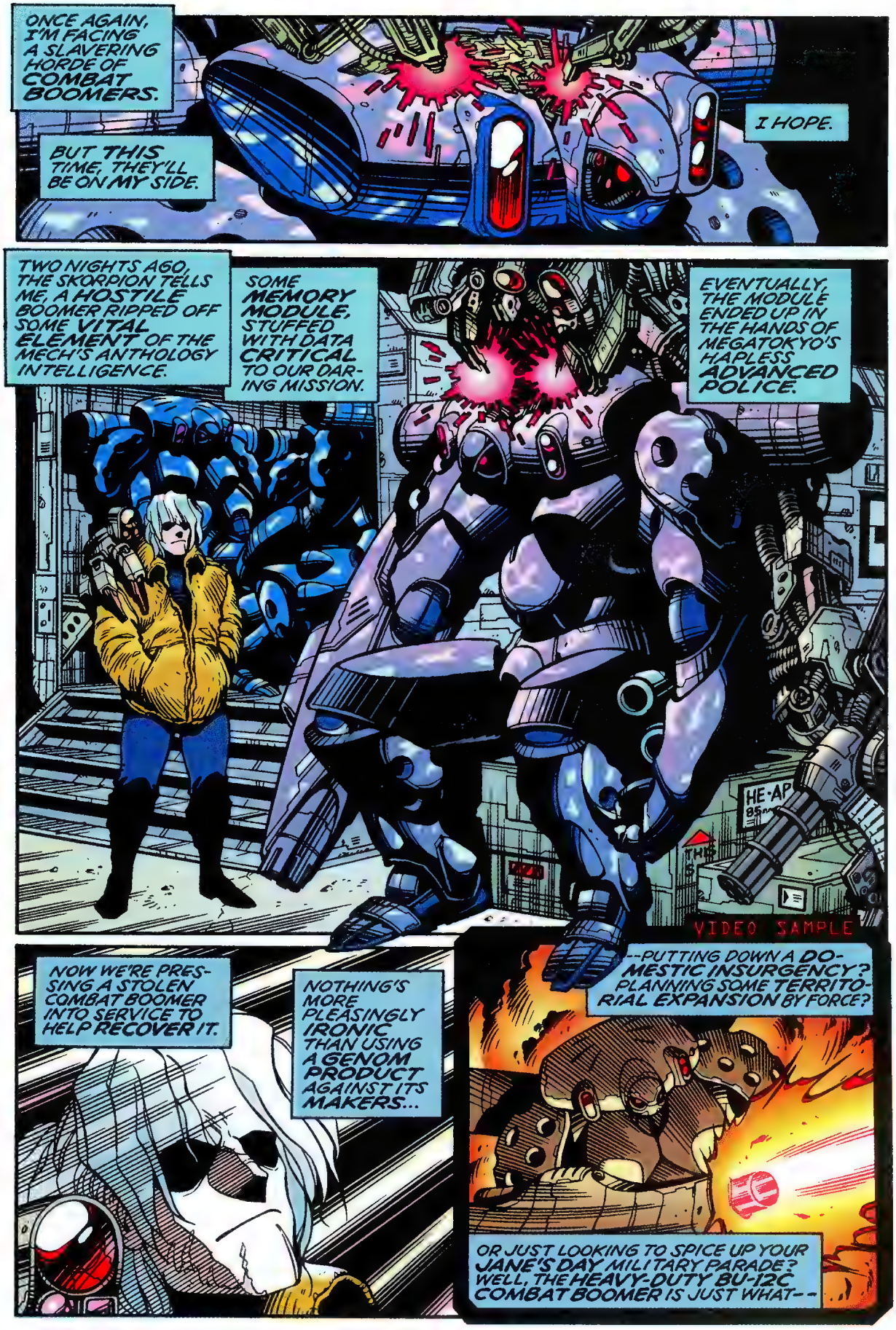

THESE FRIGGIN' MECHS MUST HAVE A WEAKNESS FOR ORGANICS, HUH?
I'M NOT HAVING A PRESEIZURE HALLUCI-NATION, THIS TIME...
THESE MACHINES, THE SKORPION'S IMPROVISED SUBUNIT MECHS, ARE REAL, NOT IMAGINARY.
THEY HAVEN'T CANNIBALIZED YOU FOR PARTS YET, I NOTICE.
HEY--!
THE MECHS LOOK RAGGED, PIECED TOGETHER, BARELY FUNCTIONAL...
...LIKE ME...
...BUT EVEN AFTER THREE YEARS...
HOLD ON!
DO THESE THINGS ACTUALLY KNOW YOU?
SKORPION
...I CAN STILL RECOGNIZE PARTS OF THE SKORPION'S ORIGINAL FRAME.
--TO INTRODUCE THE FINAL MEMBER OF YOUR TEAM--
--THE PRIDE AND JOY OF VOERUNG-MIKOYAN INTERESSENGE-MEINSCHAFT'S ADVANCED MECHATRONICS DIVISION--
HEY VASHINEVSKAYA ...
--THE SKORPION 19 ANTHOLOGY INTELLIGENCE SEMI-AUTONOMOUS SELF-REPLICATING RECON/COMBAT MECHANIZED UNIT--
VREEE
...YOU NEVER SAID WE'D BE WORKING WITH A MECH...!

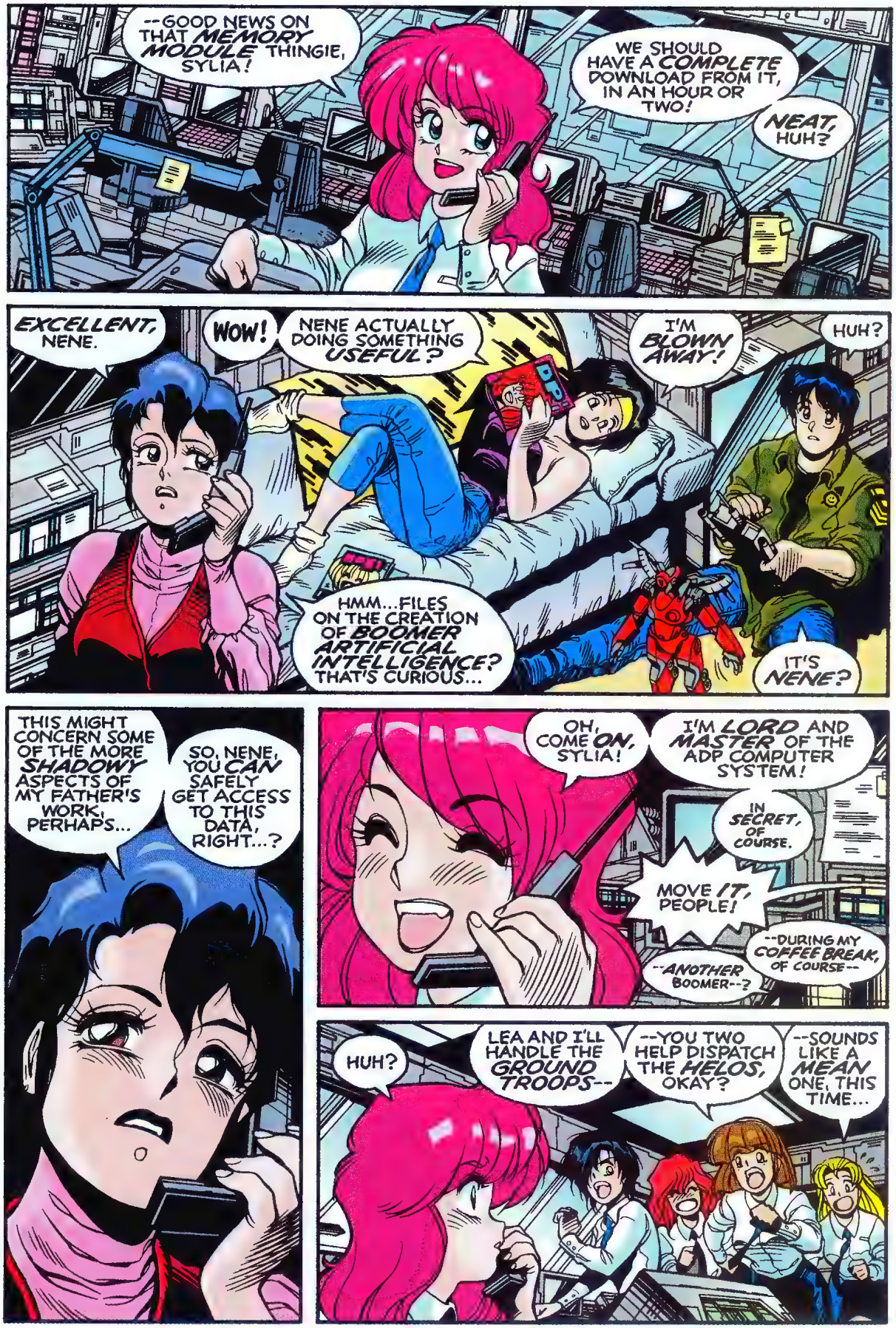

HIT SIXTH FLOOR, PLEASE.
HEY--
--QUIT SHOVING--
ADPOLICE
--WHAT'S THE LOAD LIMIT ON THIS THING?
--GOING DOWN, MR. TYLER?
--SO THEN HE SAYS--
--EVER TELL YOU I'M CLAUSTRO-PHOBIC?
--MAN, I HATE SHIFT CHANGES--
--SHOULDA TAKEN THE STAIRS--
--SO THEN I SAY--
--THE TERM CATTLE CAR COMES TO MIND--
--ABOUT THAT BOOMER FROM A COUPLE OF NIGHTS AGO--
HEARD FROM THE TECHIES DOWNSTAIRS--
--Y'KNOW THAT MEMORY MODULE WE PICKED UP OFF THAT LAST BOOMER?
YEAH.
SHIRO RIP
TURNS OUT THOSE GEEKS IN COMP/ANALYSIS FINALLY DECRYPTED THE DAMN THING, MAN.
WELL, WHOOP-DEE-FRIGGIN'-DOO.
GLAD TO HEAR IT.
HERE WE ARE--FIFTH FLOOR, COMP/ANALYSIS--
HOLD THE DOOR, PLEASE!
SHIRO HOMAGE
UH, THIS IS MY FLOOR...!

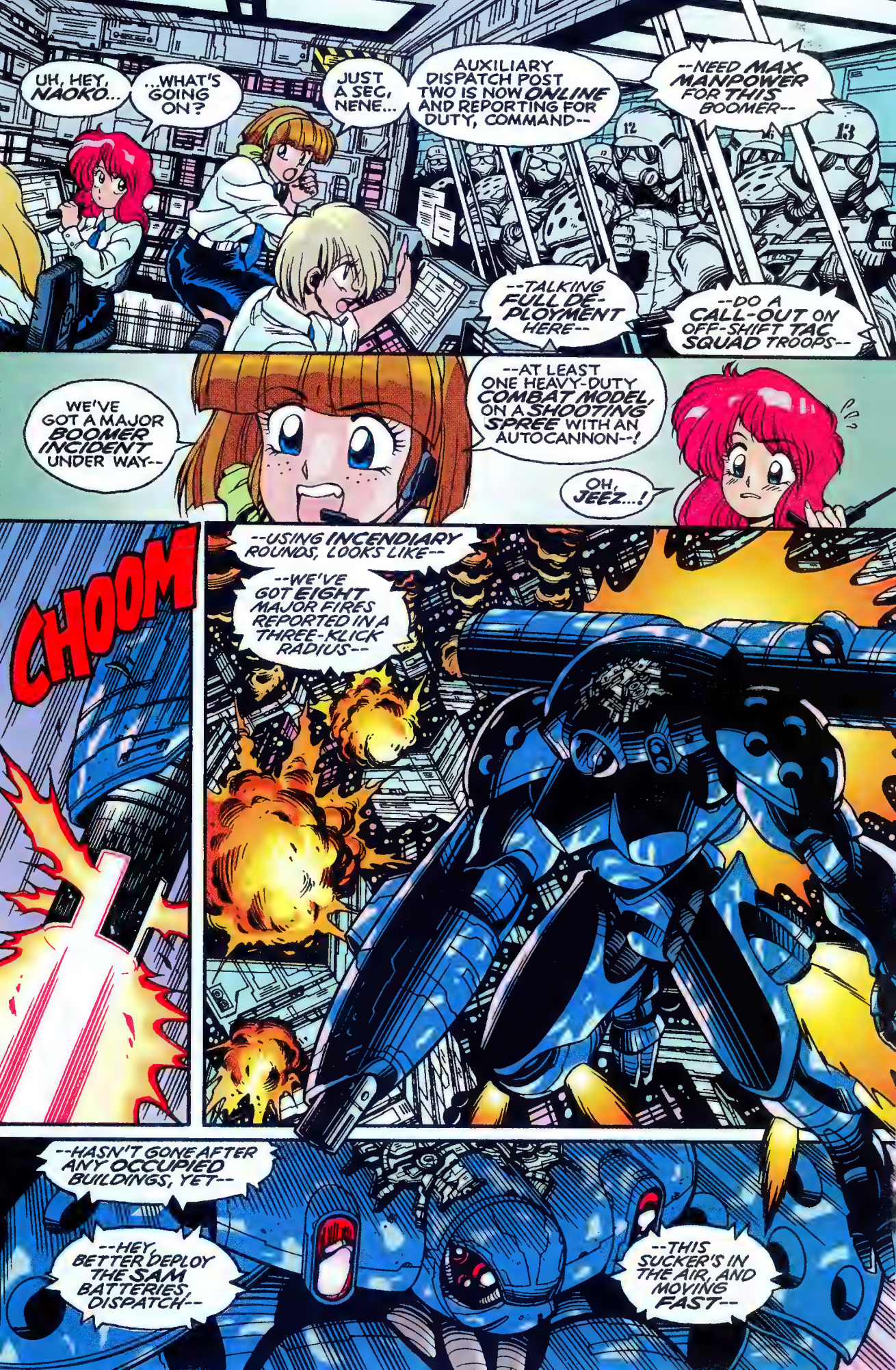
THE SKORPION I9 WAS THE LAST GASP OF FINE EUROPEAN MECHATRONICS, BEFORE GENOM'S BOOMER TECHNOLOGY FINALLY DROVE THE EUROS OUT OF THE FIELD.
IT WAS DESIGNED AS AN ANTHOLOGY INTELLIGENCE, ABLE TO DISPERSE ITS LIMITED AWARENESS THOUGH A JURY-RIGGED NETWORK OF SUBUNIT MECHS AND COMPUTERS.
COMPARED TO THE HUMAN-DERIVED COMPLEXITY OF GENOM'S BOOMERS, THE SKORPION IS CRUDE AND PATHETIC, A BARELY COGNITIVE HEAP OF OBSOLETE MACHINERY.
BUT IT'S ALMOST UNBEATABLE AT THE FEW SPECIALIZED TASKS IT WAS BUILT TO HANDLE.
A MECHANICAL IDIOT SAVANT, YOU MIGHT SAY.
--VASHNEVSKAYA, YOUR COMLINK IMPLANT SHOULD BE ABLE TO RECEIVE THE SKORPION'S ENCRYPTED TRANSMISSIONS NOW.
CAN YOU HEAR IT?
THE SKORPION COMMUNICATES VIA "AUDIO SAMPLES" TAKEN FROM VARIOUS MEDIA SOURCES.
THIS MIGHT BE A BIT JARRING, AT FIRST...
NAH, NOT REALLY.
IT JUST SOUNDS LIKE REALLY PRETENTIOUS AUDIO-FORMAT PERFORMANCE ART...
...DON' KNOW WHOO IZ?

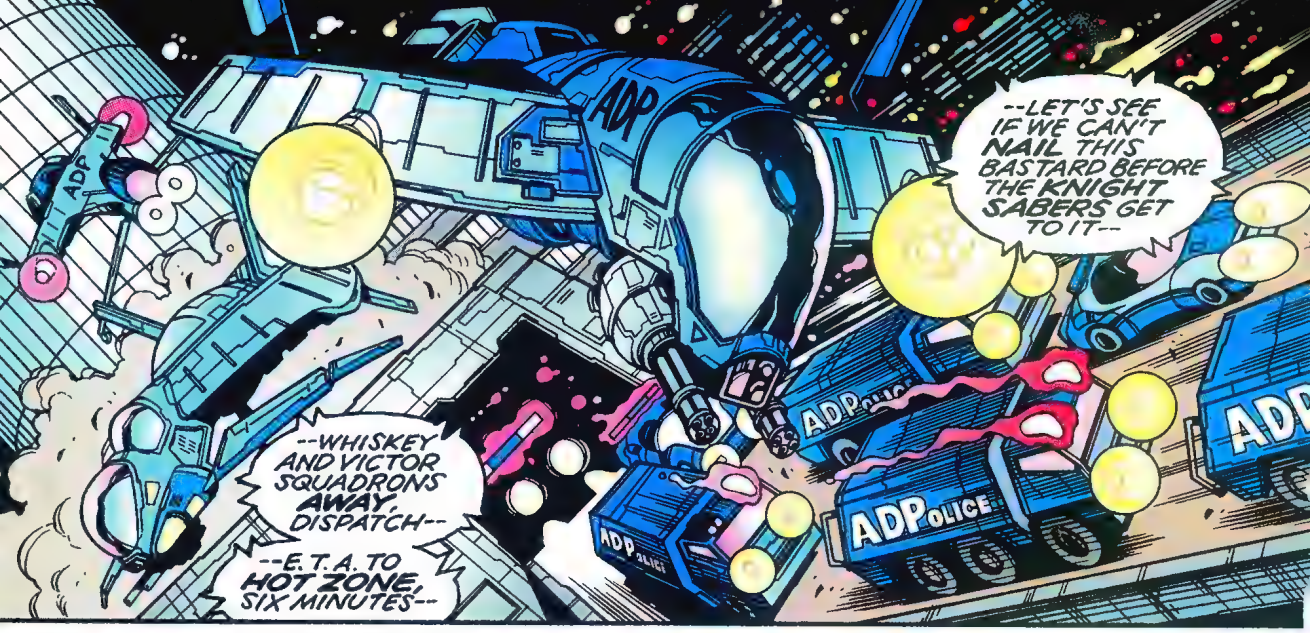
THREE YEARS AGO, FEELING THE ECONOMIC BITE FROM GENOM, A CONSORTIUM OF AILING EUROPEAN CORPORATIONS HIRED MY EXTRACTION TEAM.
C'MON, MAN...
WE CAME TO MEGATOKYO, THE VERY LION'S DEN, TO SNAG ONE OF GENOM'S "INTELLECTUAL ASSETS."
...HAVE SOME SYMPATHY, HUH? I'M NOT LIKE THESE IDIOT MECHS...
...I'M A SENTIENT BEING LIKE YOU, DAMN IT...
ALAS, SOMEONE HAD LEAKED WORD OF OUR DARING MISSION TO OUR TARGET.
GENOM, WARNED OF OUR EVIL INTENT, LAUNCHED A PREEMPTIVE STRIKE.
COMBAT BOOMERS, SIMILAR TO MY DECAPITATED FRIEND HERE, AMBUSHED US IN TOKYO BAY.
THE HUMAN MEMBERS OF THE TEAM FACED CERTAIN DEATH.
BUT THE SKORPION HAD ALREADY BEEN SHIPPED TO MEGATOKYO, WEEKS AHEAD OF OUR ARRIVAL.
HOPING FOR SOME POSTHUMOUS REVENGE, I STARTED TO TRANSMIT THE SKORPION'S ACTIVATION CODE.
MAYBE THE MECH COULD DO SOME DAMAGE TO GENOM ON ITS OWN.

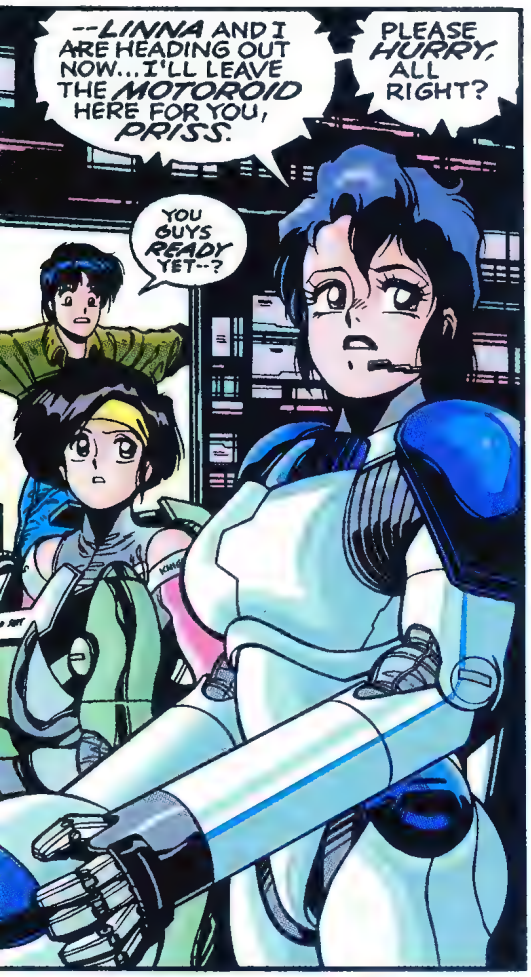

BUT BEFORE I COULD "LET SLIP THE DOGS OF WAR"--
--GENOM INTERRUPTED ME WITH A TRANSMISSION OF ITS OWN--
HEY, NENE...
...WHAT'CHA DOING DOWN HERE, IN THE LAND OF COMPUTER GEEKS...?
MAN, YOU GUYS ARE JUST TOO PAROCHIAL.
YOU GOTTA CULTIVATE AN APPRECIATION OF THE PROGRAMMING TECHNIQUES OF OTHER CULTURES, SEE?
COMP/ ANALYSIS
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU COULDN'T FIGURE OUT THIS MODULE'S CODING STRUCTURE...
GIVE IT A REST, SIMMONS...
IT'S AN OBVIOUS VARIANT OF AN OLD GERMAN PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE THAT USED TO BE ALL THE RAGE IN EUROPEAN MECH DESIGN.
SIMPLE STUFF, REALLY.
YEAH, WELL, WHAT'S ON THE DAMN THING?
DISCTEK HR 120
HIGH-DENSITY OPTICAL STORAGE MEMORY MODULE
LOOKS LIKE A WEIRD JUMBLE OF FILES ON THE ORIGIN OF BOOMER ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE... ANCIENT HISTORY, REALLY.
ANYWAY, YOU GUYS CAN CHECK IT OUT, I'VE GOT IT DOWNLOADING NOW.
JUST LET ME KNOW IF YOU GET STYMIED AGAIN BY SUCH SIMPLE CRAP.
CLEARLY, NO ONE AROUND HERE COMES CLOSE TO MY LEVEL OF SKILL...
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, JERK...!

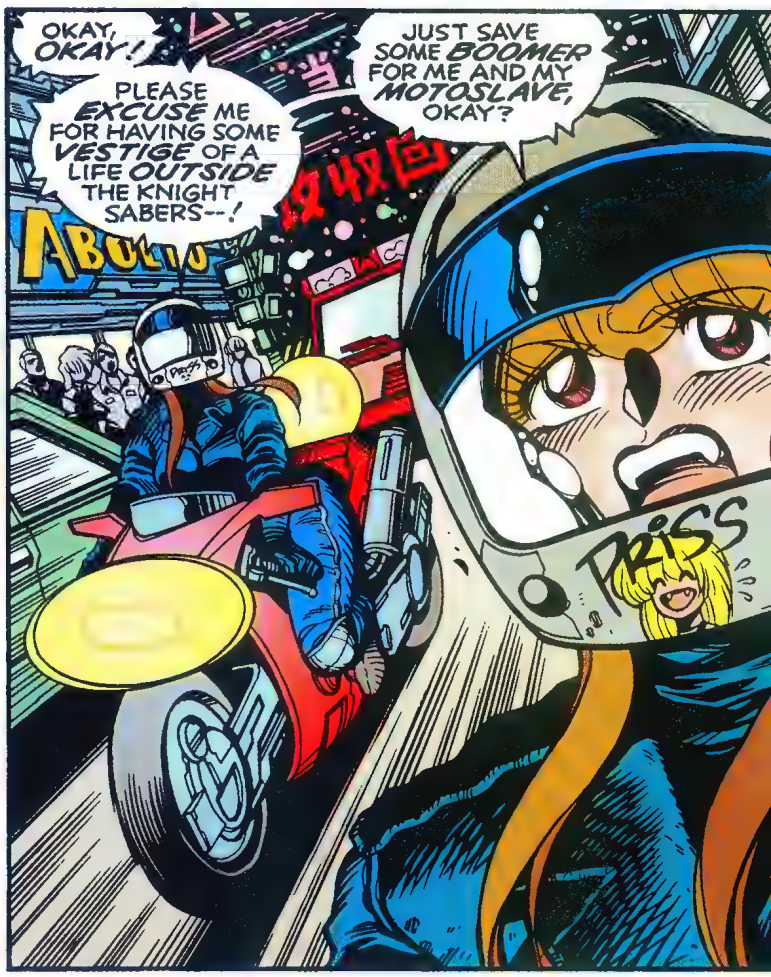

ONCE AGAIN, I'M FACING A SLAVERING HORDE OF COMBAT BOOMERS.
BUT THIS TIME, THEY'LL BE ON MY SIDE.
I HOPE.
TWO NIGHTS AGO, THE SKORPION TELLS ME, A HOSTILE BOOMER RIPPED OFF SOME VITAL ELEMENT OF THE MECH'S ANTHOLOGY INTELLIGENCE.
SOME MEMORY MODULE, STUFFED WITH DATA CRITICAL TO OUR DARING MISSION.
EVENTUALLY, THE MODULE ENDED UP IN THE HANDS OF MEGATOKYO'S HAPLESS ADVANCED POLICE.
HE-AP
VIDEO SAMPLE
NOW WE'RE PRESSING A STOLEN COMBAT BOOMER INTO SERVICE TO HELP RECOVER IT.
NOTHING'S MORE PLEASINGLY IRONIC THAN USING A GENOM PRODUCT AGAINST ITS MAKERS...
--PUTTING DOWN A DOMESTIC INSURGENCY? PLANNING SOME TERRITORIAL EXPANSION BY FORCE?
OR JUST LOOKING TO SPICE UP YOUR JANE'S DAY MILITARY PARADE? WELL, THE HEAVY-DUTY BU-12C COMBAT BOOMER IS JUST WHAT--

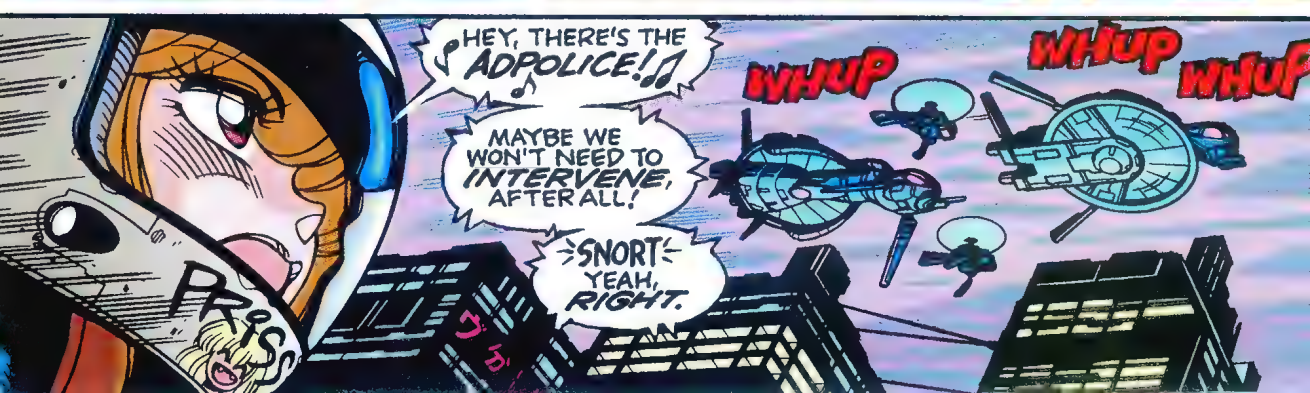

--GOOD NEWS ON THAT MEMORY MODULE THINGIE, SYLIA!
WE SHOULD HAVE A COMPLETE DOWNLOAD FROM IT, IN AN HOUR OR TWO!
NEAT, HUH?
EXCELLENT, NENE.
WOW!
NENE ACTUALLY DOING SOMETHING USEFUL?
I'M BLOWN AWAY!
HUH?
HMM...FILES ON THE CREATION OF BOOMER ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE? THAT'S CURIOUS...
IT'S NENE?
THIS MIGHT CONCERN SOME OF THE MORE SHADOWY ASPECTS OF MY FATHER'S WORK, PERHAPS...
SO, NENE, YOU CAN SAFELY GET ACCESS TO THIS DATA, RIGHT...?
OH, COME ON, SYLIA!
I'M LORD AND MASTER OF THE ADP COMPUTER SYSTEM!
IN SECRET, OF COURSE.
MOVE IT, PEOPLE!
--DURING MY COFFEE BREAK, OF COURSE--
--ANOTHER BOOMER--?
HUH?
LEA AND I'LL HANDLE THE GROUND TROOPS--
--YOU TWO HELP DISPATCH THE HELOS, OKAY?
--SOUNDS LIKE A MEAN ONE, THIS TIME...

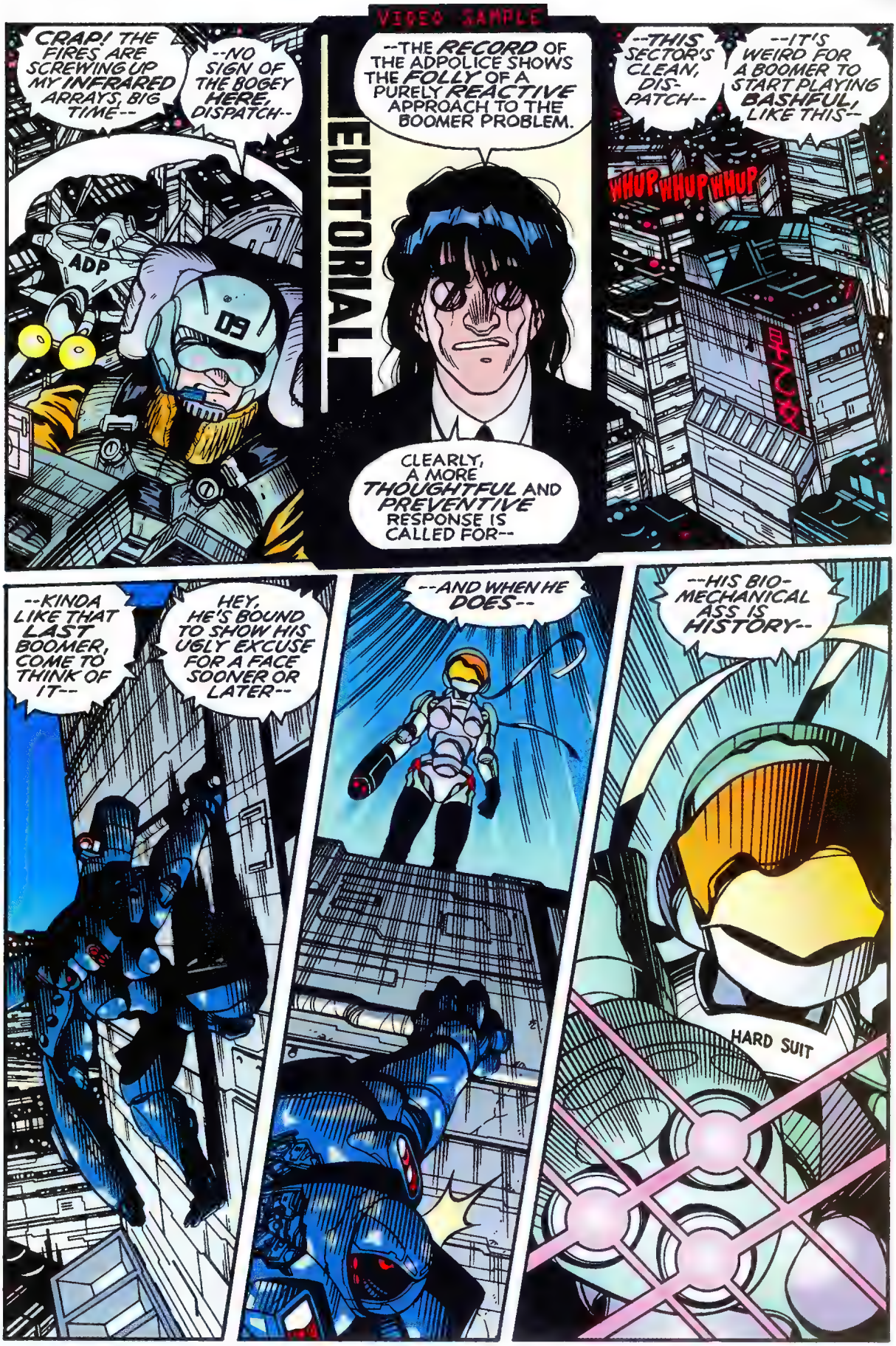

UH, HEY, NAOKO...
...WHAT'S GOING ON?
JUST A SEC, NENE...
AUXILIARY DISPATCH POST TWO IS NOW ONLINE AND REPORTING FOR DUTY, COMMAND--
--NEED MAX MANPOWER FOR THIS BOOMER--
--TALKING FULL DE-PLOYMENT HERE--
--DO A CALL-OUT ON OFF-SHIFT TAC SQUAD TROOPS--
WE'VE GOT A MAJOR BOOMER INCIDENT UNDER WAY--
--AT LEAST ONE HEAVY-DUTY COMBAT MODEL, ON A SHOOTING SPREE WITH AN AUTOCANNON--!
OH, JEEZ...!
CHOOM
--USING INCENDIARY ROUNDS, LOOKS LIKE--
--WE'VE GOT EIGHT MAJOR FIRES REPORTED IN A THREE-KLICK RADIUS--
--HASN'T GONE AFTER ANY OCCUPIED BUILDINGS, YET--
--HEY, BETTER DEPLOY THE SAM BATTERIES, DISPATCH!--
--THIS SUCKER'S IN THE AIR, AND MOVING FAST--


--LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T NAIL THIS BASTARD BEFORE THE KNIGHT SABERS GET TO IT--
--WHISKEY AND VICTOR SQUADRONS AWAY. DISPATCH--
--E.T.A. TO HOT ZONE, SIX MINUTES--
ADP
ADPOLICE

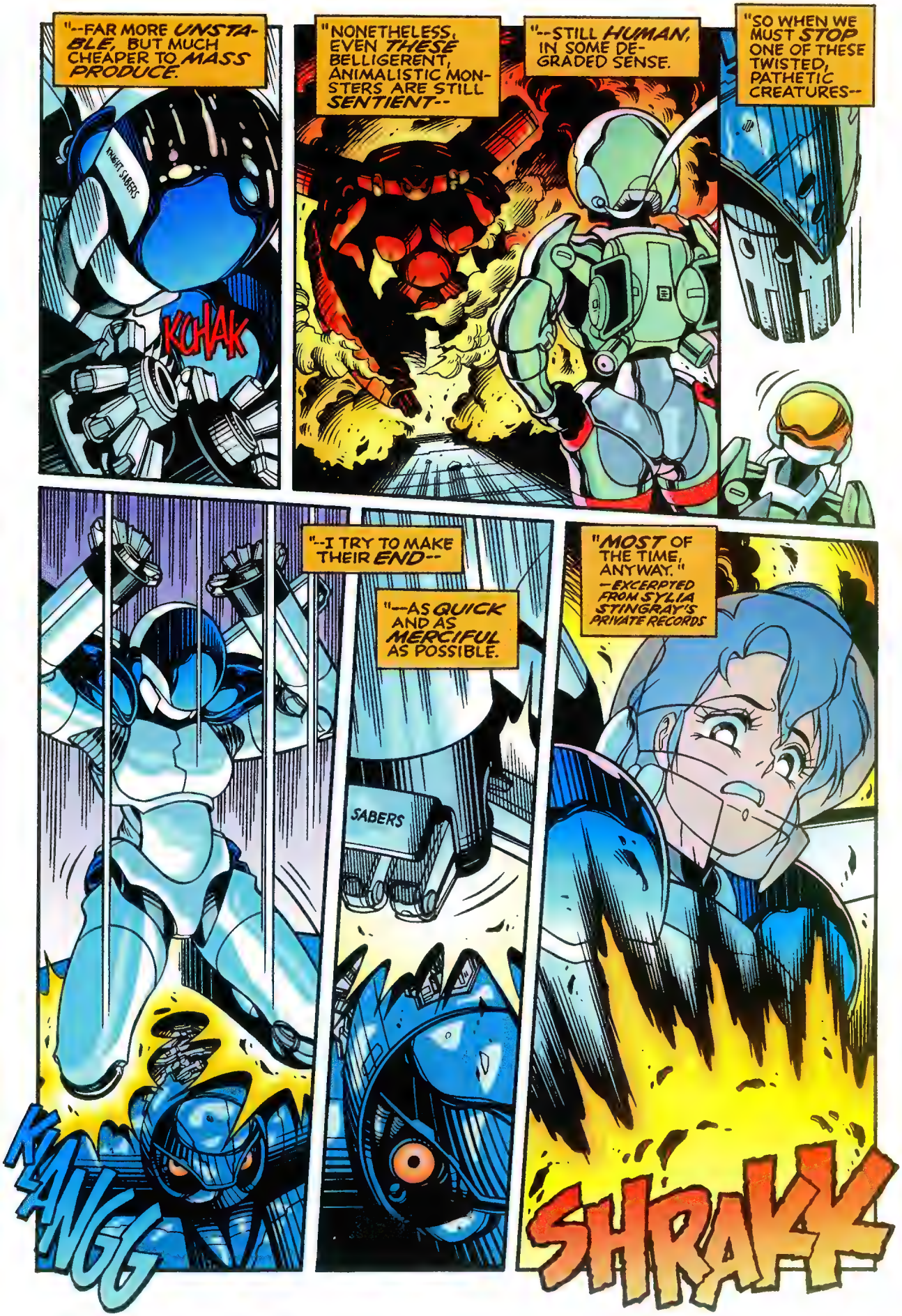

--LINNA AND I ARE HEADING OUT NOW... I'LL LEAVE THE MOTOROID HERE FOR YOU, PRISS.
PLEASE HURRY, ALL RIGHT?
YOU GUYS READY YET--?

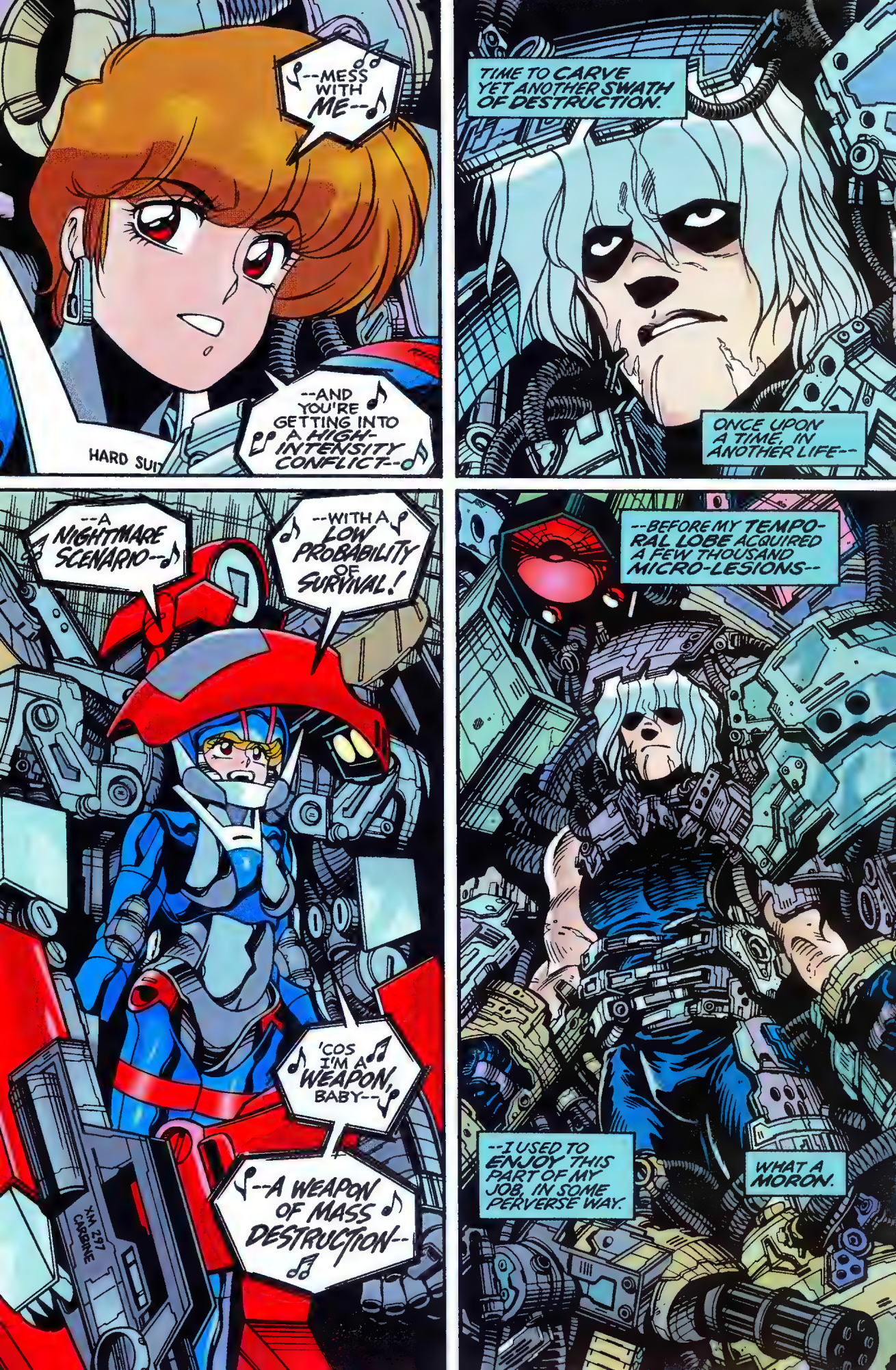

OKAY, OKAY!
PLEASE EXCUSE ME FOR HAVING SOME VESTIGE OF A LIFE OUTSIDE THE KNIGHT SABERS--!
JUST SAVE SOME BOOMER FOR ME AND MY MOTOSLAVE, OKAY?
PRISS

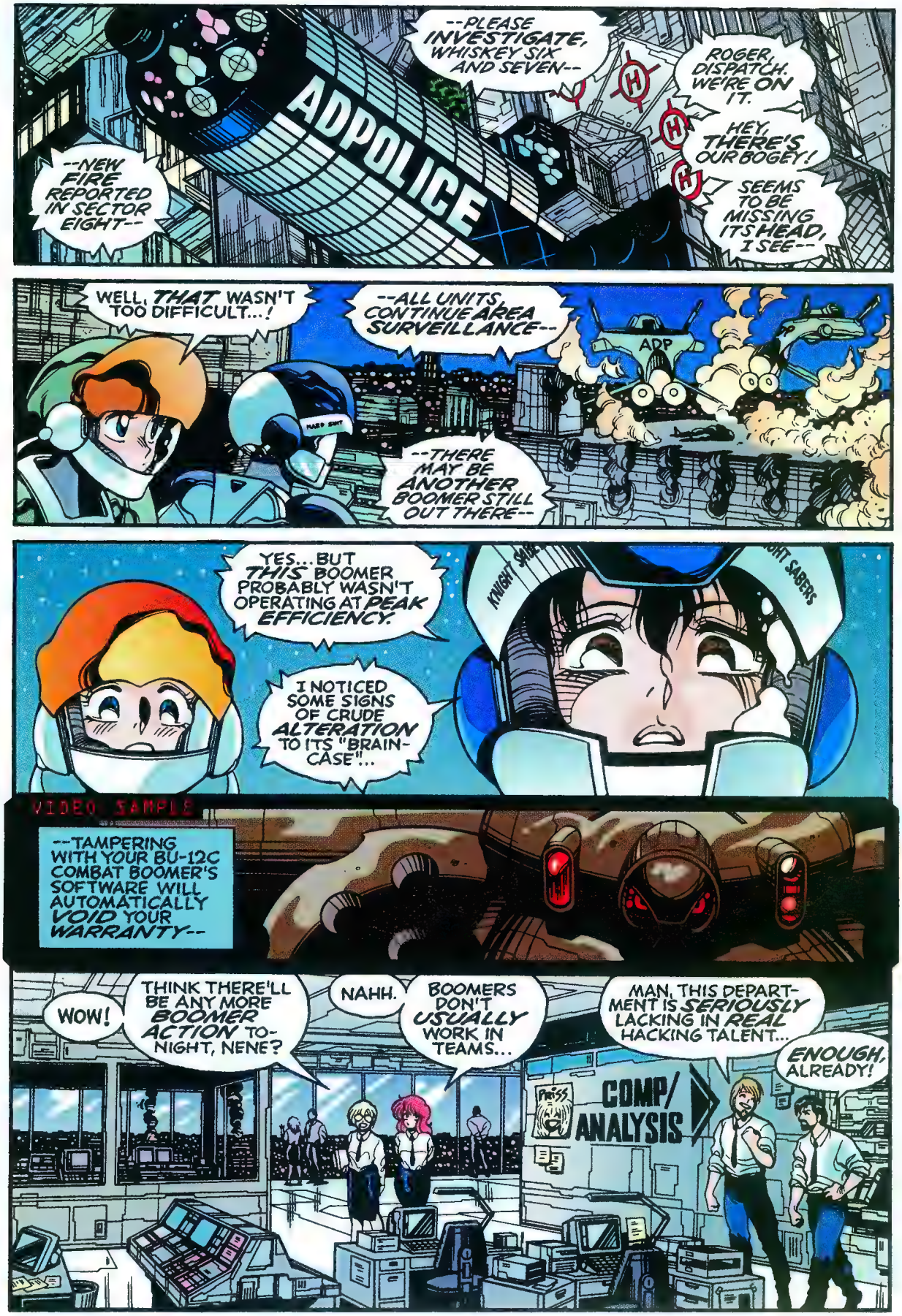

HEY, THERE'S THE ADPOLICE!
MAYBE WE WON'T NEED TO INTERVENE, AFTER ALL!
SNORT
YEAH, RIGHT.
WHUP
WHUP
WHUP
PRISS

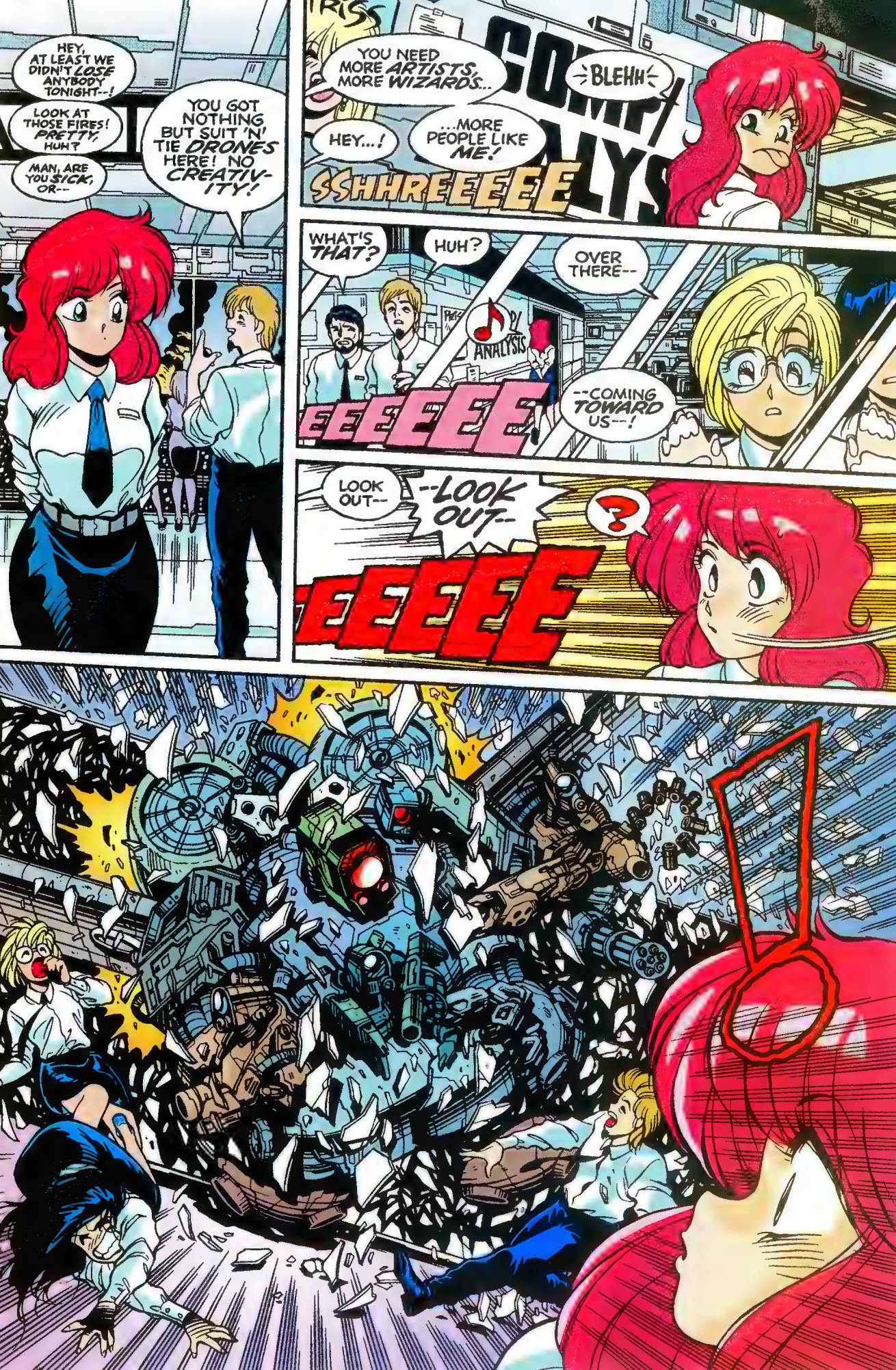

CRAP! THE FIRES ARE SCREWING UP MY INFRARED ARRAYS, BIG TIME--
--NO SIGN OF THE BOGEY HERE, DISPATCH--
ADP
VIDEO SAMPLE
EDITORIAL
--THE RECORD OF THE ADPOLICE SHOWS THE FOLLY OF A PURELY REACTIVE APPROACH TO THE BOOMER PROBLEM.
CLEARLY, A MORE THOUGHTFUL AND PREVENTIVE RESPONSE IS CALLED FOR--
--THIS SECTOR'S CLEAN, DIS-PATCH--
--IT'S WEIRD FOR A BOOMER TO START PLAYING BASHFUL, LIKE THIS--
WHUP WHUP WHUP
--KINDA LIKE THAT LAST BOOMER, COME TO THINK OF IT--
HEY, HE'S BOUND TO SHOW HIS UGLY EXCUSE FOR A FACE SOONER OR LATER--
--AND WHEN HE DOES--
--HIS BIO-MECHANICAL ASS IS HISTORY--
HARD SUIT

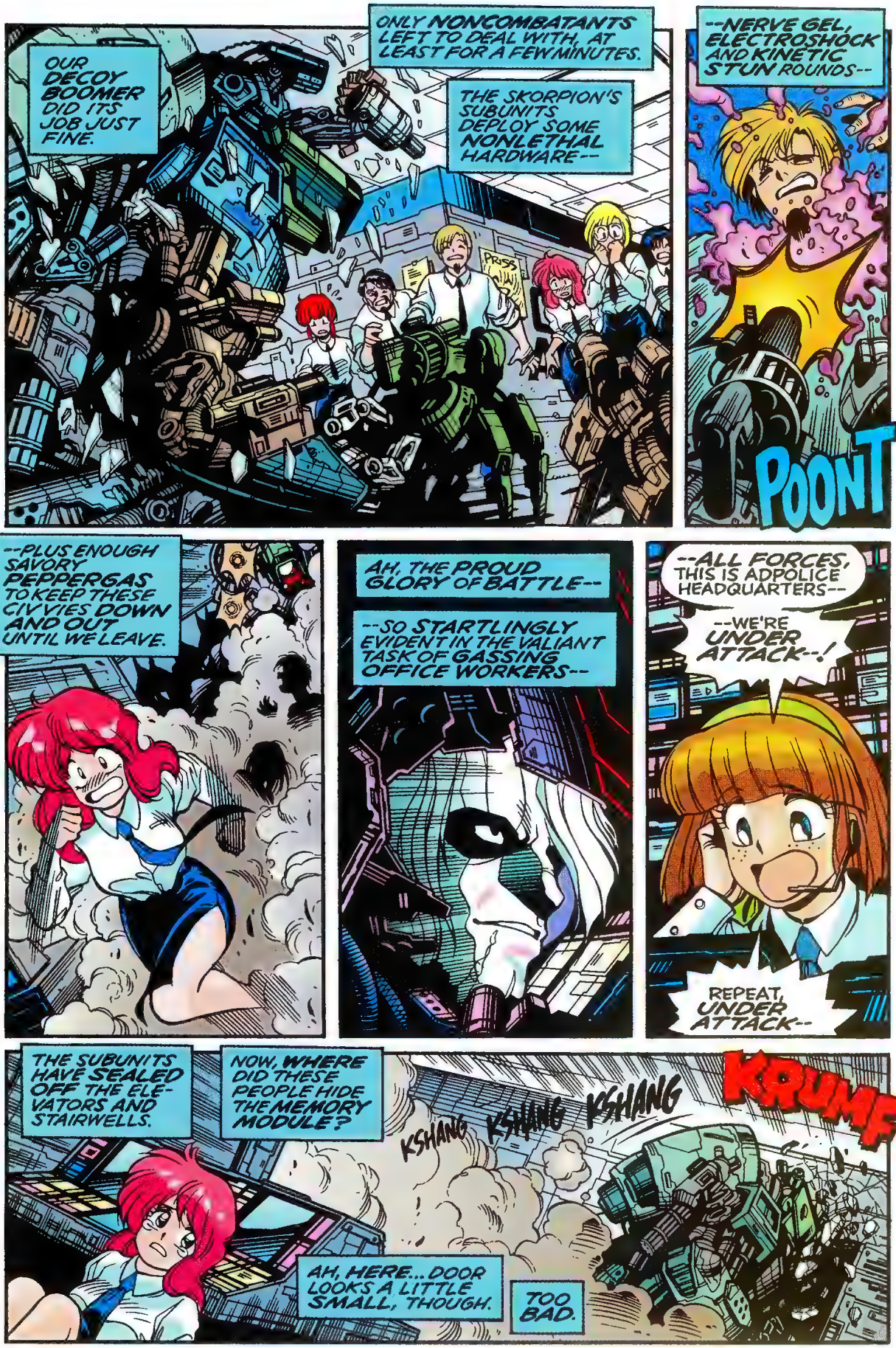
ZZZK
CHOOM CHOOM
CHOOM CHOOM CHOOM CHOOM CHOOM
FWOOOSH
"MY FATHER, USING A SOMEWHAT RADICAL TECHNIQUE, DERIVED THE FORM OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USED IN BOOMERS--
"--FROM A HUMAN MODEL, A HUMAN BRAIN.
"BUT FOR ITS COMBAT BOOMERS--
"--GENOM UTILIZED A DRASTICALLY SIMPLIFIED VERSION OF HIS WORK--
FWOOOSH
ZUM

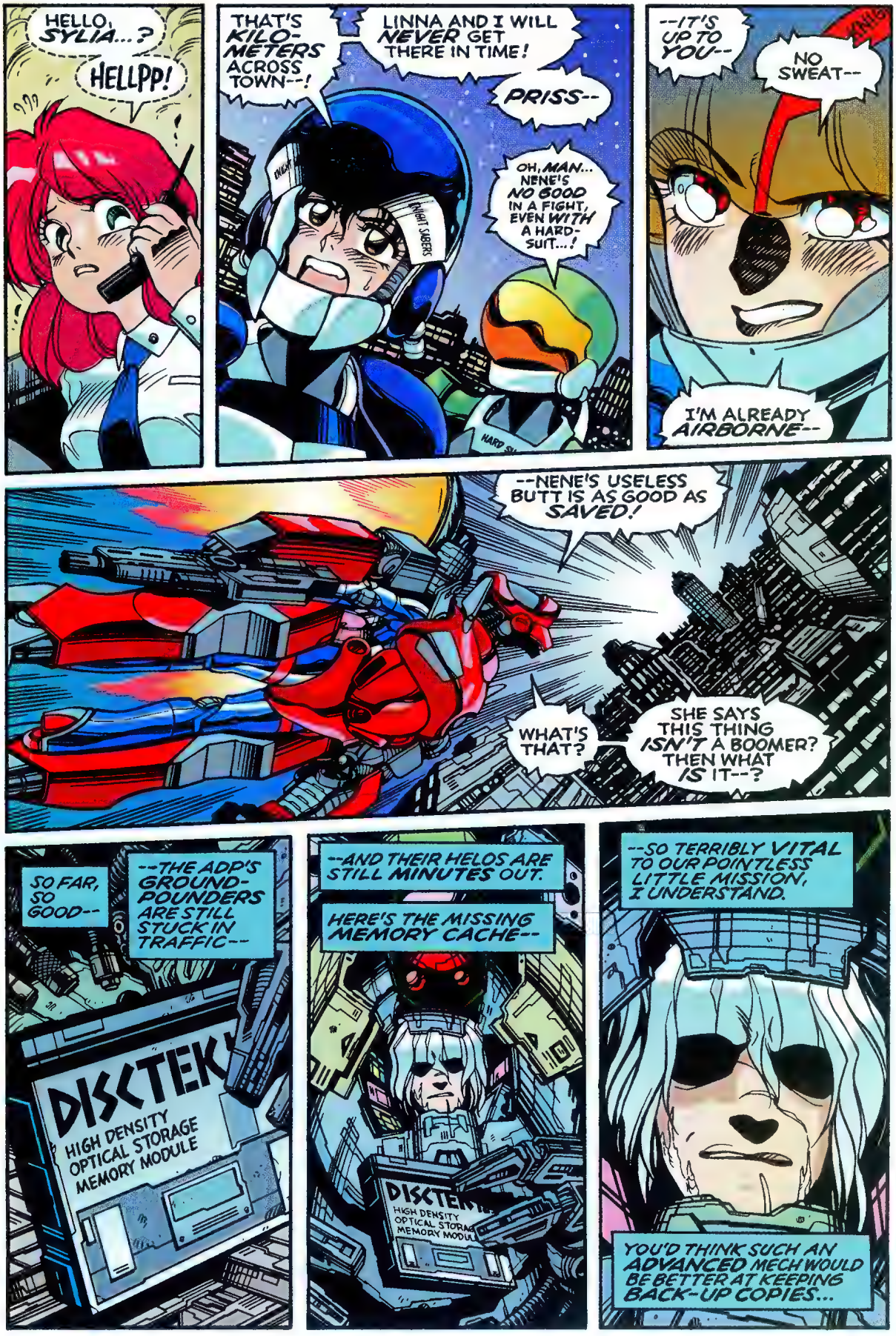

"--FAR MORE UNSTABLE, BUT MUCH CHEAPER TO MASS PRODUCE.
KUHAK
"NONETHELESS, EVEN THESE BELLIGERENT, ANIMALISTIC MONSTERS ARE STILL SENTIENT--
"--STILL HUMAN, IN SOME DEGRADED SENSE.
"SO WHEN WE MUST STOP ONE OF THESE TWISTED, PATHETIC CREATURES--
"--I TRY TO MAKE THEIR END--
"--AS QUICK AND AS MERCIFUL AS POSSIBLE.
SABERS
"MOST OF THE TIME, ANYWAY."
--EXCERPTED FROM SYLIA STINGRAY'S PRIVATE RECORDS
KLANGG
SHRAKK


--MESS WITH ME--
--AND YOU'RE GETTING INTO A HIGH-INTENSITY CONFLICT--
HARD SUI
TIME TO CARVE YET ANOTHER SWATH OF DESTRUCTION.
ONCE UPON A TIME, IN ANOTHER LIFE--
--A NIGHTMARE SCENARIO--
--WITH A LOW PROBABILITY OF SURVIVAL!
'COS I'M A WEAPON, BABY--
--A WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION--
XM 297 CARBINE
--BEFORE MY TEMPORAL LOBE ACQUIRED A FEW THOUSAND MICRO-LESIONS--
--I USED TO ENJOY THIS PART OF MY JOB, IN SOME PERVERSE WAY.
WHAT A MORON.

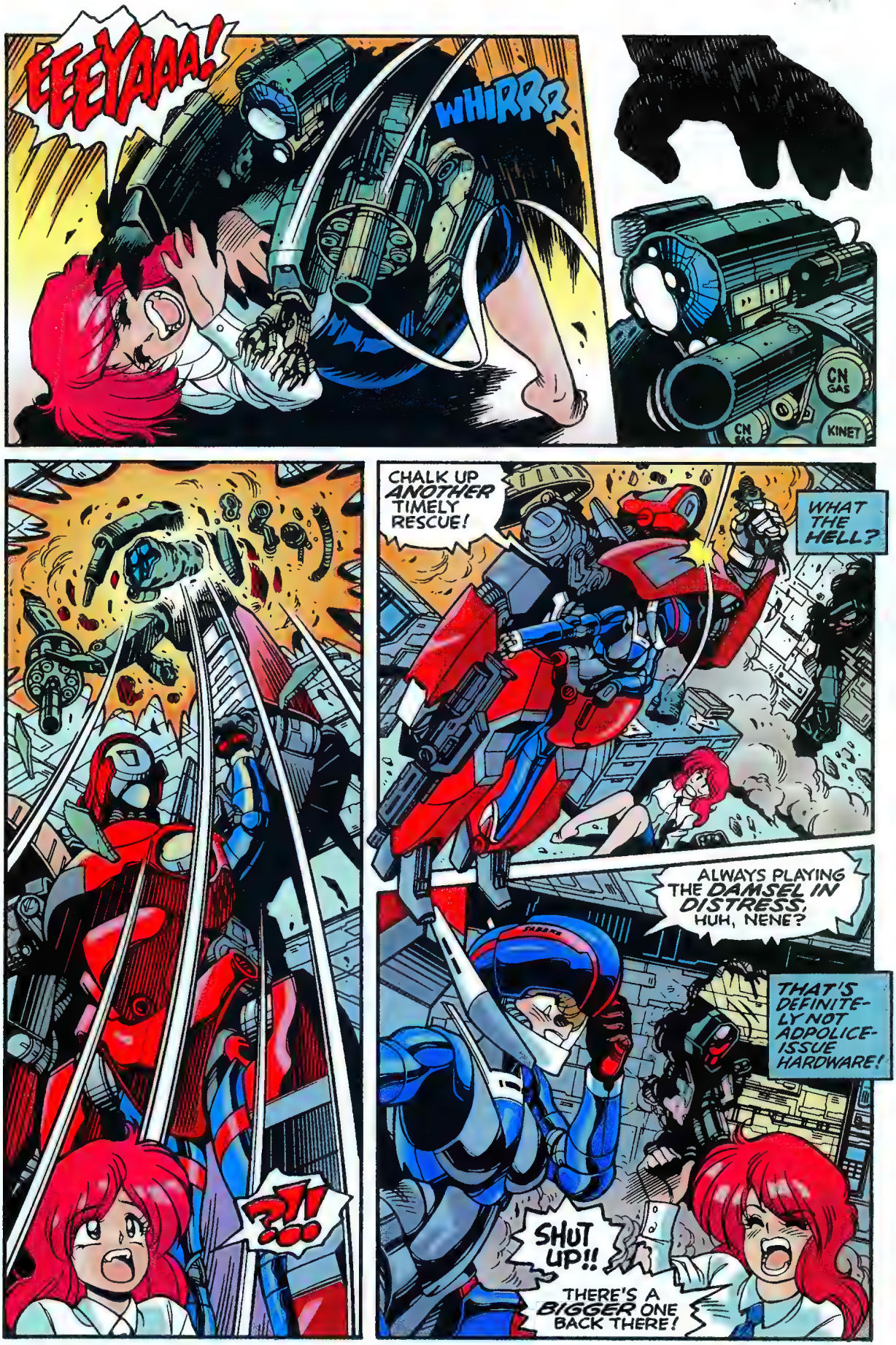

ADPOLICE
--PLEASE INVESTIGATE, WHISKEY SIX AND SEVEN--
ROGER, DISPATCH. WE'RE ON IT.
HEY, THERE'S OUR BOGEY!
SEEMS TO BE MISSING ITS HEAD, I SEE---
--NEW FIRE REPORTED IN SECTOR EIGHT--
WELL, THAT WASN'T TOO DIFFICULT...!
--ALL UNITS CONTINUE AREA SURVEILLANCE--
ADP
--THERE MAY BE ANOTHER BOOMER STILL OUT THERE--
YES... BUT THIS BOOMER PROBABLY WASN'T OPERATING AT PEAK EFFICIENCY.
I NOTICED SOME SIGNS OF CRUDE ALTERATION TO ITS "BRAIN-CASE"...
VIDEO SAMPLE
--TAMPERING WITH YOUR BU-12C COMBAT BOOMER'S SOFTWARE WILL AUTOMATICALLY VOID YOUR WARRANTY--
WOW!
THINK THERE'LL BE ANY MORE BOOMER ACTION TO-NIGHT, NENE?
NAHH.
BOOMERS DON'T USUALLY WORK IN TEAMS...
MAN, THIS DEPART-MENT IS SERIOUSLY LACKING IN REAL HACKING TALENT...
ENOUGH, ALREADY!
COMP/ ANALYSIS


HEY, AT LEAST WE DIDN'T LOSE ANYBODY TONIGHT--!
LOOK AT THOSE FIRES! PRETTY, HUH?
MAN, ARE YOU SICK, OR--
YOU GOT NOTHING BUT SUIT 'N' TIE DRONES HERE! NO CREATIV-ITY!
YOU NEED MORE ARTISTS, MORE WIZARDS...
BLEHH
HEY...!
...MORE PEOPLE LIKE ME!
SSHHREEEEE
WHAT'S THAT?
HUH?
OVER THERE--
--COMING TOWARD US--!
EEEEEE
LOOK OUT--
--LOOK OUT--
?
EEEEE


OUR DECOY BOOMER DID ITS JOB JUST FINE.
ONLY NONCOMBATANTS LEFT TO DEAL WITH, AT LEAST FOR A FEW MINUTES.
THE SKORPION'S SUBUNITS DEPLOY SOME NONLETHAL HARDWARE--
--NERVE GEL, ELECTROSHOCK AND KINETIC STUN ROUNDS--
POONT
--PLUS ENOUGH SAVORY PEPPERGAS TO KEEP THESE CIVVIES DOWN AND OUT UNTIL WE LEAVE.
AH, THE PROUD GLORY OF BATTLE--
--SO STARTLINGLY EVIDENT IN THE VALIANT TASK OF GASSING OFFICE WORKERS--
--ALL FORCES, THIS IS ADPOLICE HEADQUARTERS--
--WE'RE UNDER ATTACK--!
REPEAT, UNDER ATTACK--
THE SUBUNITS HAVE SEALED OFF THE ELE-VATORS AND STAIRWELLS.
NOW, WHERE DID THESE PEOPLE HIDE THE MEMORY MODULE?
KSHANG
KSHANG
KSHANG
KRUMF
AH, HERE... DOOR LOOKS A LITTLE SMALL, THOUGH.
TOO BAD.


HELLO, SYLIA...?
HELLPP!
THAT'S KILO-METERS ACROSS TOWN--!
LINNA AND I WILL NEVER GET THERE IN TIME!
PRISS--
OH, MAN... NENE'S NO GOOD IN A FIGHT, EVEN WITH A HARD-SUIT...!
--IT'S UP TO YOU--
NO SWEAT--
I'M ALREADY AIRBORNE--
--NENE'S USELESS BUTT IS AS GOOD AS SAVED!
WHAT'S THAT?
SHE SAYS THIS THING ISN'T A BOOMER? THEN WHAT IS IT--?
SO FAR, SO GOOD--
--THE ADP'S GROUND-POUNDERS ARE STILL STUCK IN TRAFFIC--
DISCTEK
HIGH DENSITY OPTICAL STORAGE MEMORY MODULE
--AND THEIR HELOS ARE STILL MINUTES OUT.
HERE'S THE MISSING MEMORY CACHE--
--SO TERRIBLY VITAL TO OUR POINTLESS LITTLE MISSION, I UNDERSTAND.
YOU'D THINK SUCH AN ADVANCED MECH WOULD BE BETTER AT KEEPING BACK-UP COPIES...

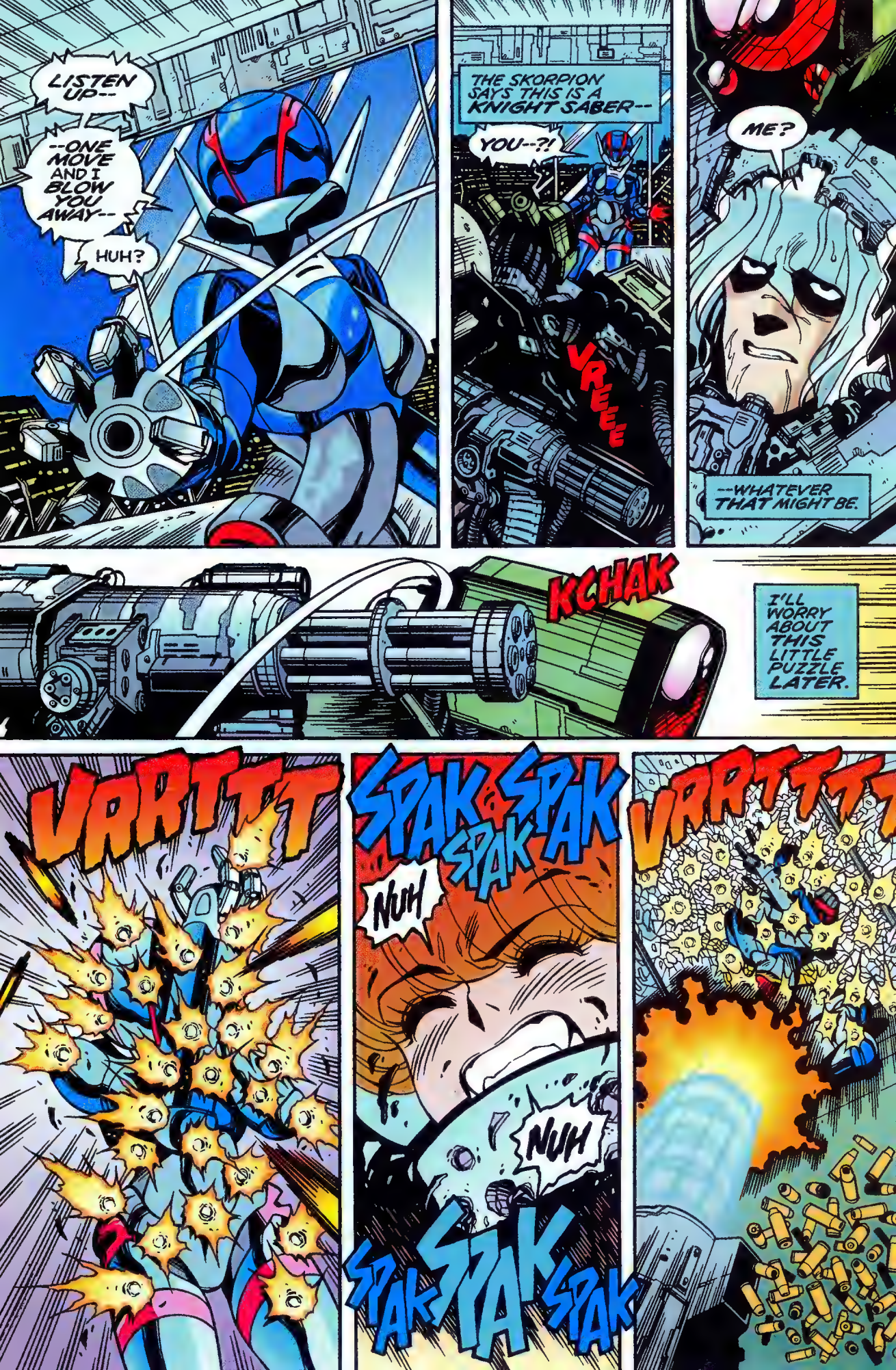
AND ON THAT THEME--
--ONE OF THE SKORPION'S SUBUNITS GETS TO WORK--
--DELETING ANY ADPOLICE RECORDS OF THE MODULE AND ITS CONTENTS.
MANIPULATING COMPUTERS IS ONE OF THE SKORPION'S PRIMARY SKILLS, AFTER ALL...
!
H-HEY...!
IT... IT'S TAMPERING WITH OUR COMPUTERS...
...MY COMPUTERS...!
HIC,- SEE, TH' ADPOLICE... COMPUTER SYSTEMS... 'R MY PERSONAL PLAYGROUND...
-URP-
GIMME A BREAK...!
VIDEO SAMPLE
NOBODY -HNNH- MESSES WITH MY MACHINES--
-HFF-
BWA HA HA HA!
SKRASH
HOW'S THAT, CREEP--
HUH?
VREEE


EEEYAAA!
WHIRR
CN GAS
KINET
?!!
CHALK UP ANOTHER TIMELY RESCUE!
WHAT THE HELL?
ALWAYS PLAYING THE DAMSEL IN DISTRESS, HUH, NENE?
THAT'S DEFINITELY NOT A POLICE-ISSUE HARDWARE!
SHUT UP!!
THERE'S A BIGGER ONE BACK THERE!

WHATEVER THE MECH IS--
STOP PICKING ON ME AND GIVE THE BAD GUYS SOME ABUSE, OKAY?
--THE SKORPION ISN'T CARRYING ANY ORDNANCE HEAVY ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH IT.
BUT THAT'S FINE--
--THE SKORPION AND I ARE OLD HANDS AT IMPROVISING SOLUTIONS--!
SSSHHHREEE
HARD SUIT
SHREEEEEEEEE
WHUNGG
KRASHH
SUIT

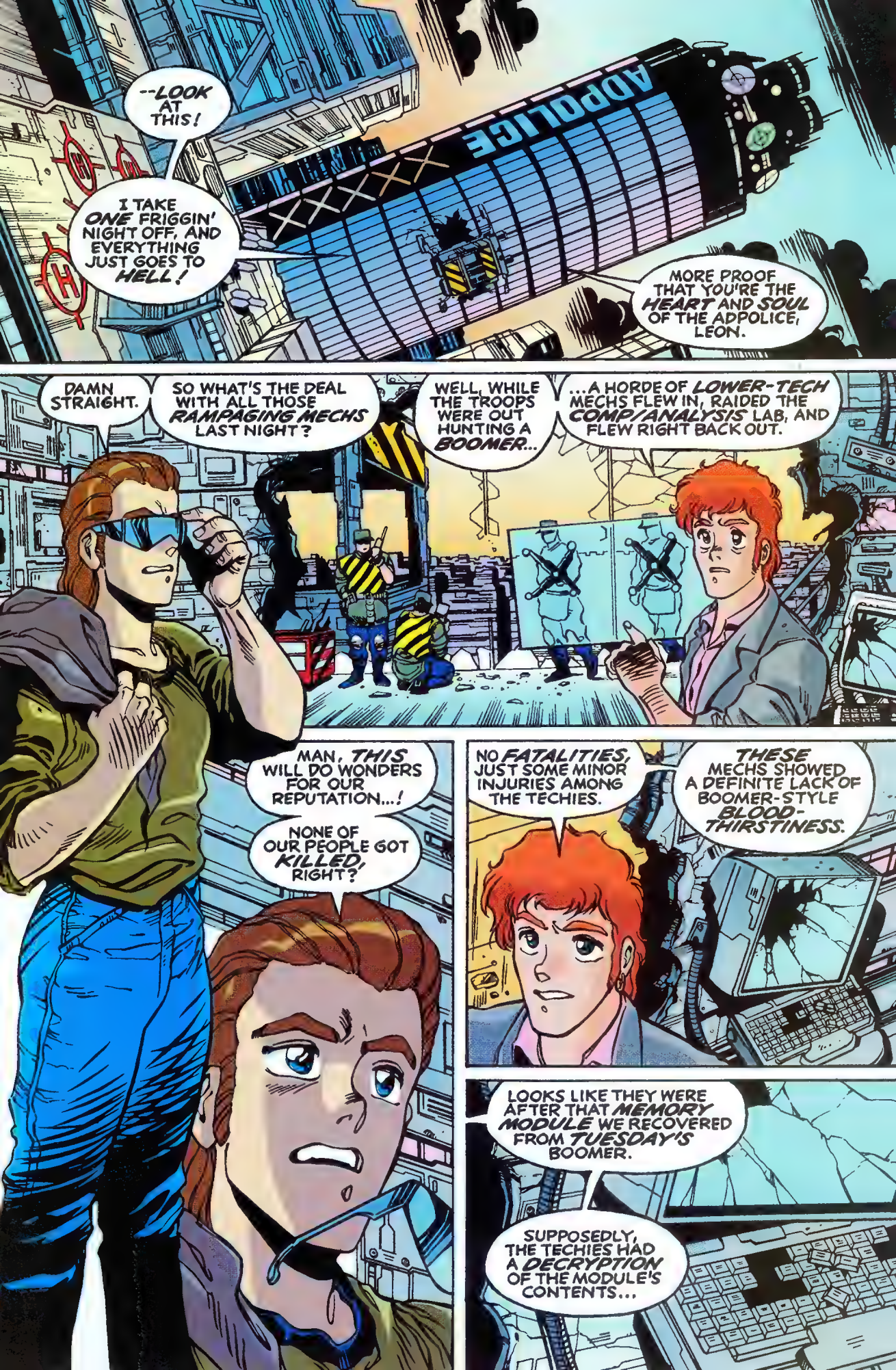
HUH?
KLANG
ALL RIGHT...!
--WELL, THAT'S ONE LESS MYSTERY MECH.
BETTER BAIL, THE ADPOLICE GUNSHIPS ARE ALMOST HERE--
KSHANG
OKAY, DICK-WEED--
--GET A TASTE OF THIS--
KSHANG KSHANG
=KOFF=
XM-297 CARBINE
CHOOM
UNNHH
--WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT--?

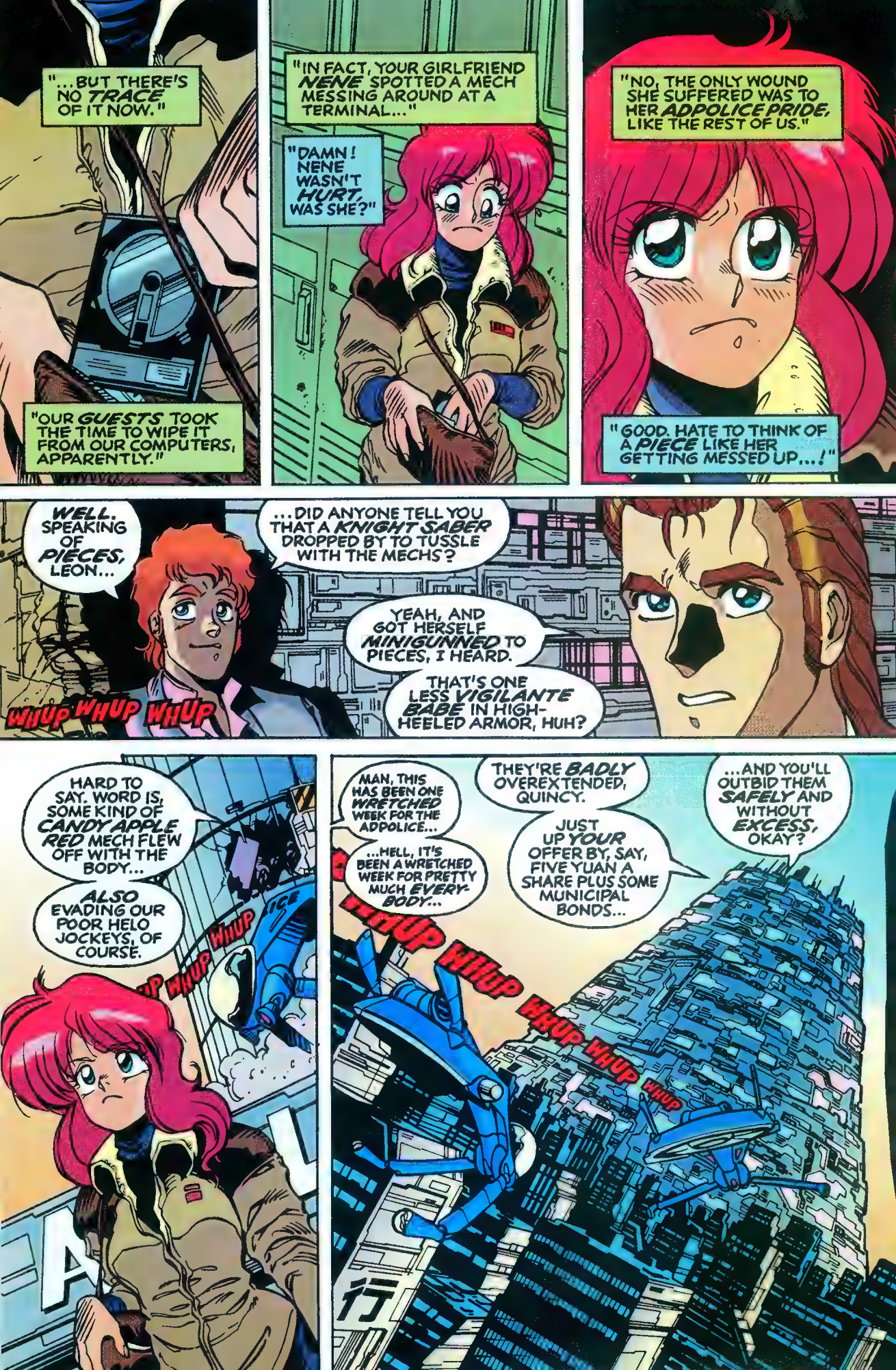
--JAMMED--
--THIS'LL HAVE TO BE HAND-TO-HAND--
--A FOOT TO THE RIGHT--
--AND THAT WOULD'VE TAKEN MY HEAD OFF--
--GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE, FAST--
--NO PROBLEM--
FWOOOSH
KLANGG
--DAMN IT--
WHRUNNCH
--WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE--
SKRANGG
--AND WHY THE HELL ARE THEY BEATING ON ME?!!

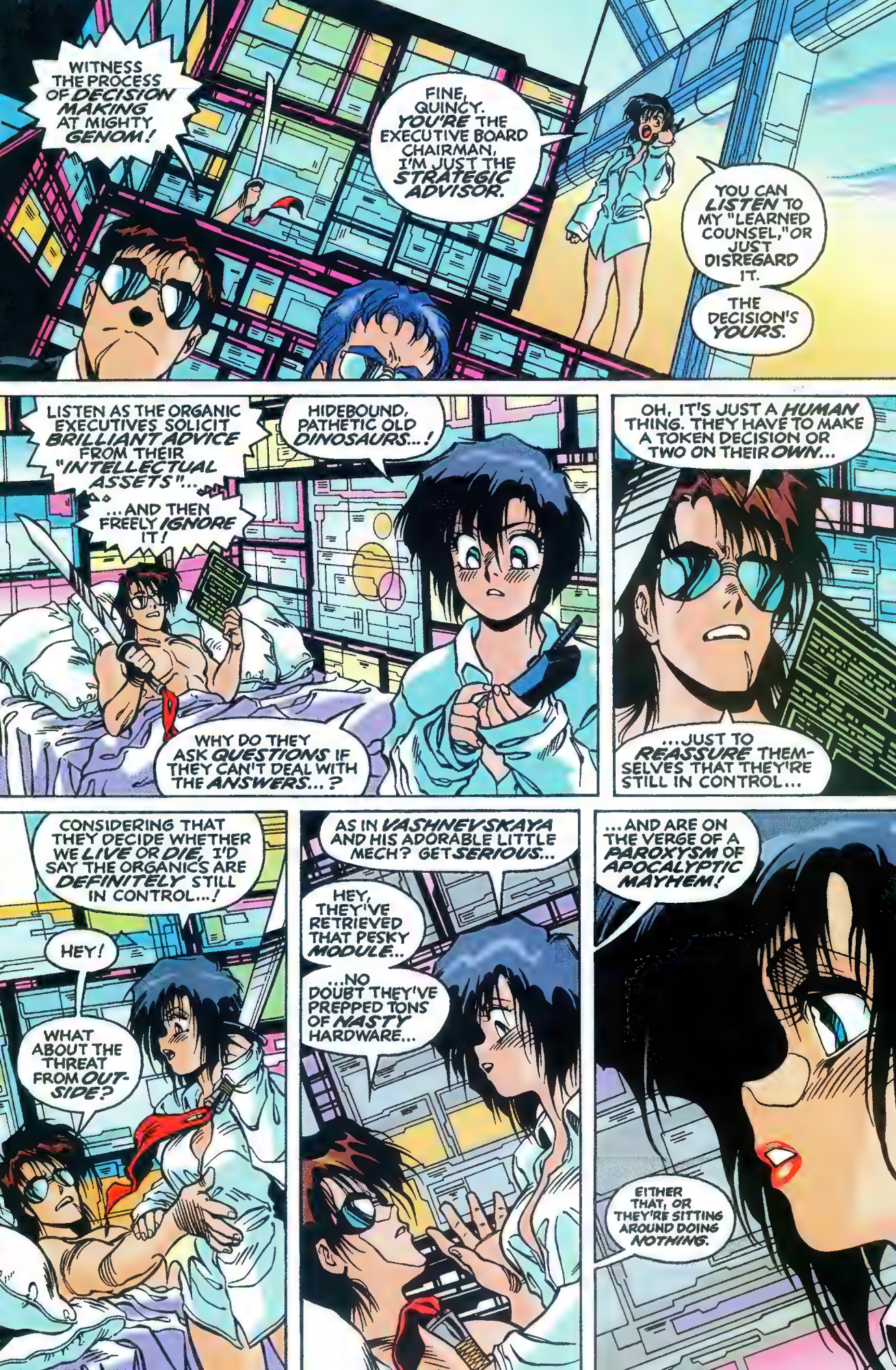

LISTEN UP--
--ONE MOVE AND I BLOW YOU AWAY--
HUH?
THE SKORPION SAYS THIS IS A KNIGHT SABER--
YOU--?!
VREEE
ME?
--WHATEVER THAT MIGHT BE.
KCHAK
I'LL WORRY ABOUT THIS LITTLE PUZZLE LATER.
VRRTTT
SPAK & SPAK SPAK
NUH
NUH
SPAK SPAK SPAK SPAK
VRRTTT

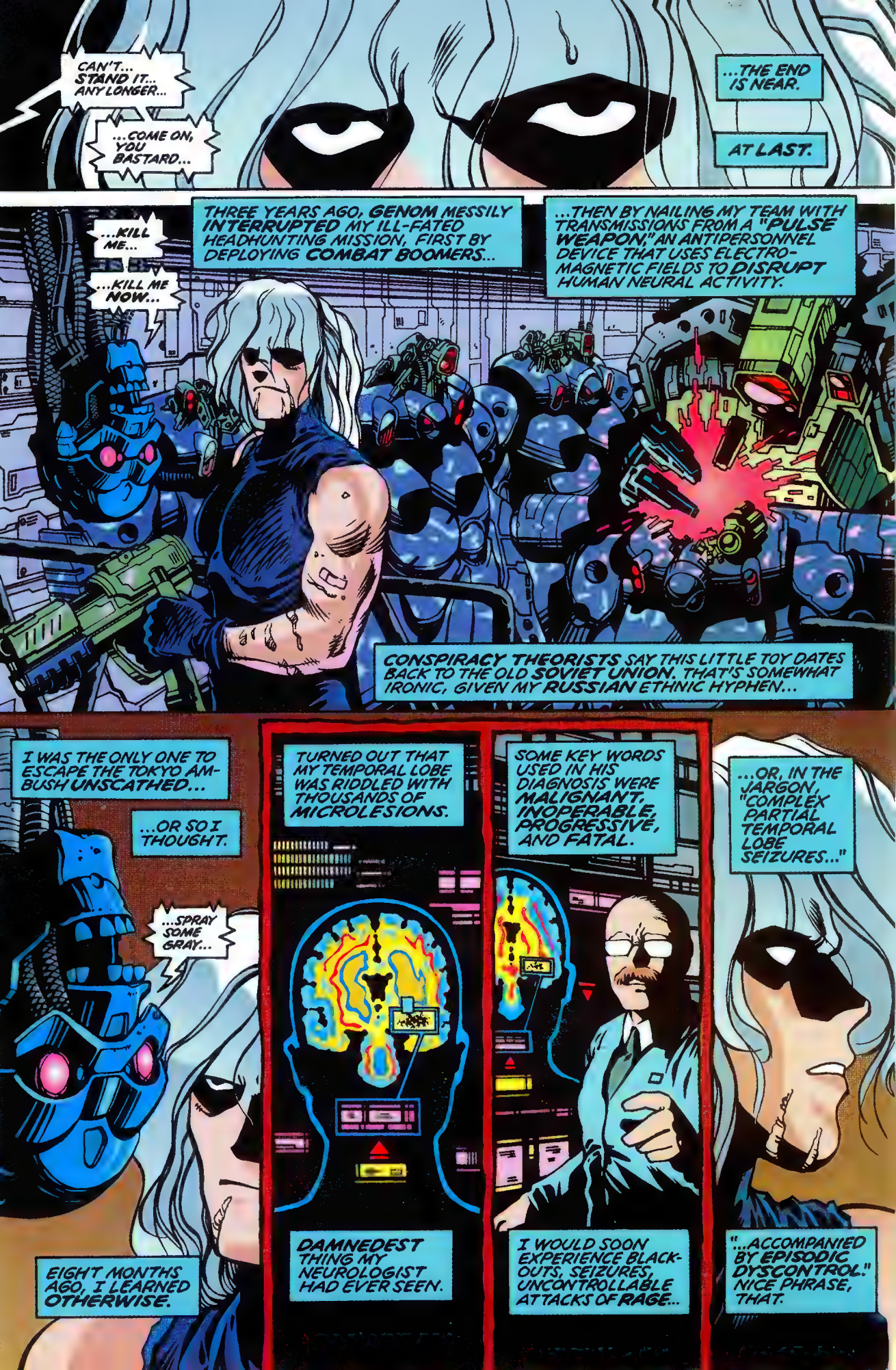
KASHHHINK
WELL.
WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP
P-PRISS...!
GUESS I'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT THAT WAS ALL ABOUT...
KLUNGG
--WHISKEY SQUADRON, ON THE SCENE--
WHUP WHUP WHUP
--HEY--
--THAT LOOKS LIKE A KNIGHT SABER--
--OR WHAT'S LEFT OF ONE--
--JEEZUS--!
--SOMEBODY JUST DIVED OUTTA ONE OF YOUR WINDOWS, DISPATCH--

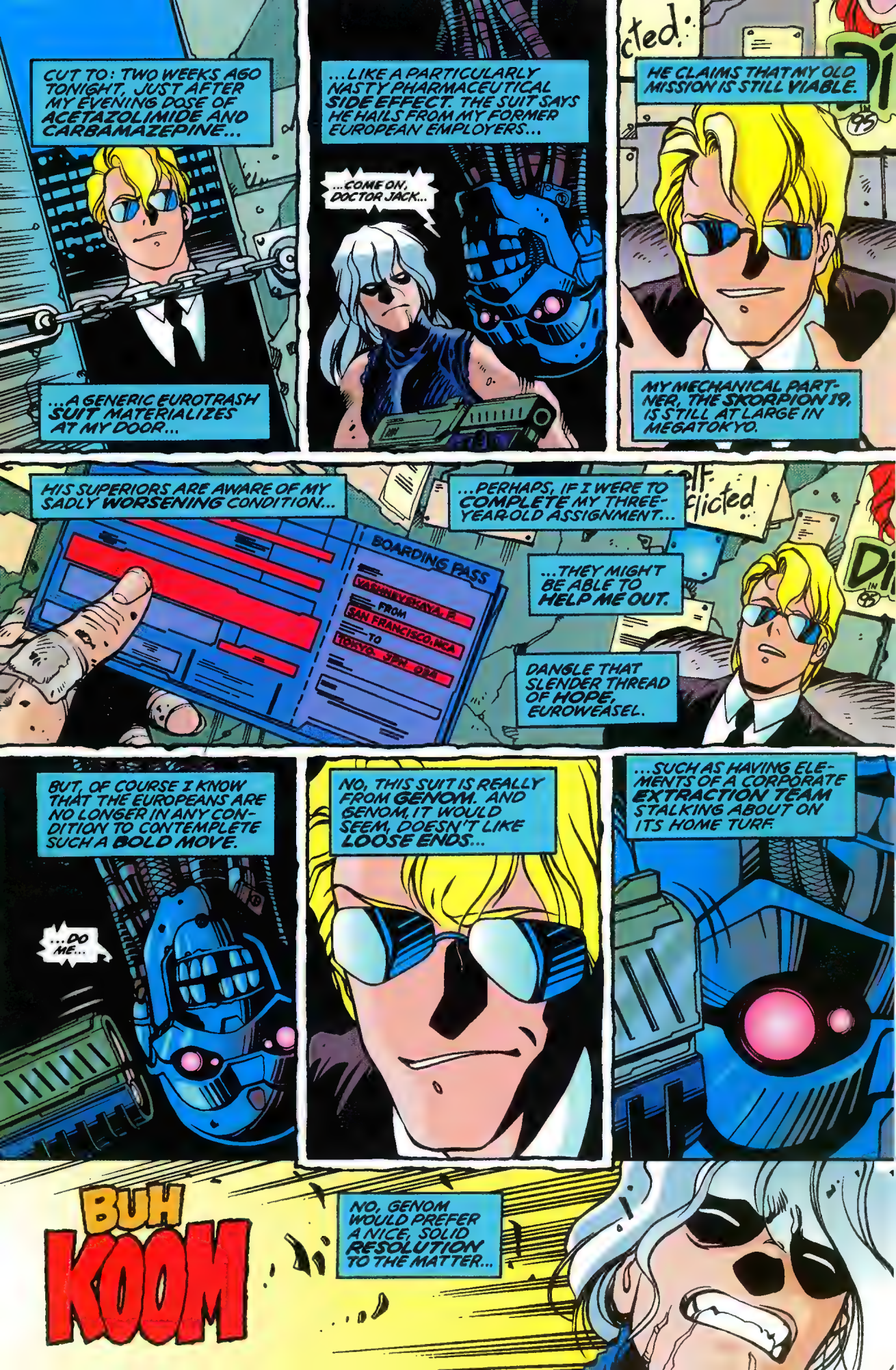
CHAPTER FOUR

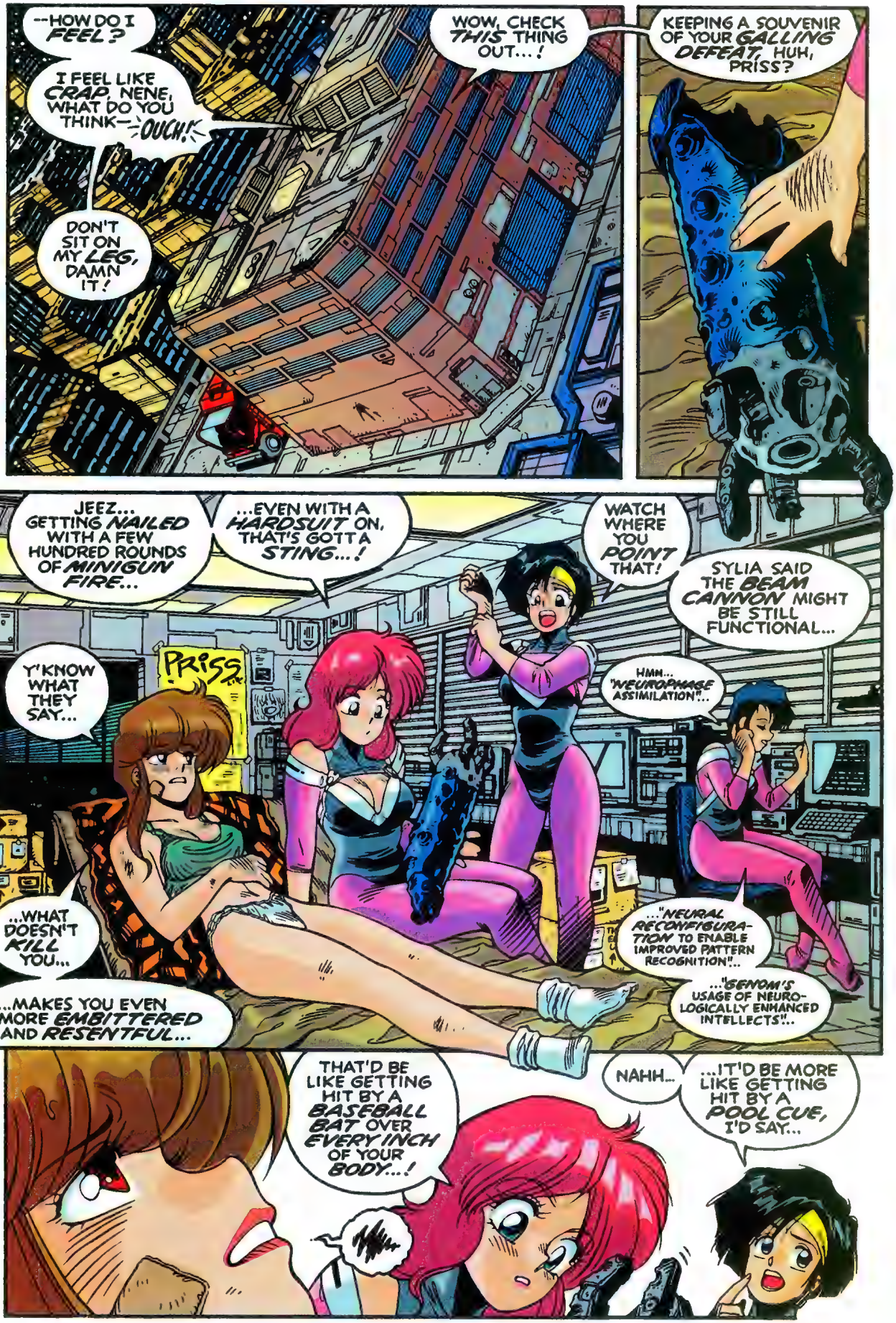

--LOOK AT THIS!
I TAKE ONE FRIGGIN' NIGHT OFF, AND EVERYTHING JUST GOES TO HELL!
ADPOLICE
MORE PROOF THAT YOU'RE THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE ADPOLICE, LEON.
DAMN STRAIGHT.
SO WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH ALL THOSE RAMPAGING MECHS LAST NIGHT?
WELL, WHILE THE TROOPS WERE OUT HUNTING A BOOMER...
...A HORDE OF LOWER-TECH MECHS FLEW IN, RAIDED THE COMP/ANALYSIS LAB, AND FLEW RIGHT BACK OUT.
MAN, THIS WILL DO WONDERS FOR OUR REPUTATION...!
NONE OF OUR PEOPLE GOT KILLED, RIGHT?
NO FATALITIES, JUST SOME MINOR INJURIES AMONG THE TECHIES.
THESE MECHS SHOWED A DEFINITE LACK OF BOOMER-STYLE BLOOD-THIRSTINESS.
LOOKS LIKE THEY WERE AFTER THAT MEMORY MODULE WE RECOVERED FROM TUESDAY'S BOOMER.
SUPPOSEDLY, THE TECHIES HAD A DECRYPTION OF THE MODULE'S CONTENTS...


"...BUT THERE'S NO TRACE OF IT NOW."
"OUR GUESTS TOOK THE TIME TO WIPE IT FROM OUR COMPUTERS, APPARENTLY."
"IN FACT, YOUR GIRLFRIEND NENE SPOTTED A MECH MESSING AROUND AT A TERMINAL..."
"DAMN! NENE WASN'T HURT, WAS SHE?"
"NO, THE ONLY WOUND SHE SUFFERED WAS TO HER ADPOLICE PRIDE, LIKE THE REST OF US."
"GOOD. HATE TO THINK OF A PIECE LIKE HER GETTING MESSED UP...!"
WELL. SPEAKING OF PIECES, LEON...
...DID ANYONE TELL YOU THAT A KNIGHT SABER DROPPED BY TO TUSSLE WITH THE MECHS?
YEAH, AND GOT HERSELF MINIGUNNED TO PIECES, I HEARD.
THAT'S ONE LESS VIGILANTE BABE IN HIGH-HEELED ARMOR, HUH?
WHUP WHUP WHUP
HARD TO SAY. WORD IS, SOME KIND OF CANDY APPLE RED MECH FLEW OFF WITH THE BODY...
ALSO EVADING OUR POOR HELO JOCKEYS, OF COURSE.
MAN, THIS HAS BEEN ONE WRETCHED WEEK FOR THE ADPOLICE...
...HELL, IT'S BEEN A WRETCHED WEEK FOR PRETTY MUCH EVERY-BODY...
THEY'RE BADLY OVEREXTENDED, QUINCY.
JUST UP YOUR OFFER BY, SAY, FIVE YUAN A SHARE PLUS SOME MUNICIPAL BONDS...
...AND YOU'LL OUTBID THEM SAFELY AND WITHOUT EXCESS, OKAY?
WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP


WITNESS THE PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING AT MIGHTY GENOM!
FINE, QUINCY. YOU'RE THE EXECUTIVE BOARD CHAIRMAN, I'M JUST THE STRATEGIC ADVISOR.
YOU CAN LISTEN TO MY "LEARNED COUNSEL," OR JUST DISREGARD IT.
THE DECISION'S YOURS.
LISTEN AS THE ORGANIC EXECUTIVES SOLICIT BRILLIANT ADVICE FROM THEIR "INTELLECTUAL ASSETS"...
...AND THEN FREELY IGNORE IT!
HIDEBOUND, PATHETIC OLD DINOSAURS...!
WHY DO THEY ASK QUESTIONS IF THEY CAN'T DEAL WITH THE ANSWERS...?
OH, IT'S JUST A HUMAN THING. THEY HAVE TO MAKE A TOKEN DECISION OR TWO ON THEIR OWN...
...JUST TO REASSURE THEMSELVES THAT THEY'RE STILL IN CONTROL...
CONSIDERING THAT THEY DECIDE WHETHER WE LIVE OR DIE, I'D SAY THE ORGANICS ARE DEFINITELY STILL IN CONTROL...!
HEY!
WHAT ABOUT THE THREAT FROM OUTSIDE?
AS IN VASHNEVSKAYA AND HIS ADORABLE LITTLE MECH? GET SERIOUS...
HEY, THEY'VE RETRIEVED THAT PESKY MODULE...
...NO DOUBT THEY'VE PREPPED TONS OF NASTY HARDWARE...
...AND ARE ON THE VERGE OF A PAROXYSM OF APOCALYPTIC MAYHEM!
EITHER THAT, OR THEY'RE SITTING AROUND DOING NOTHING.

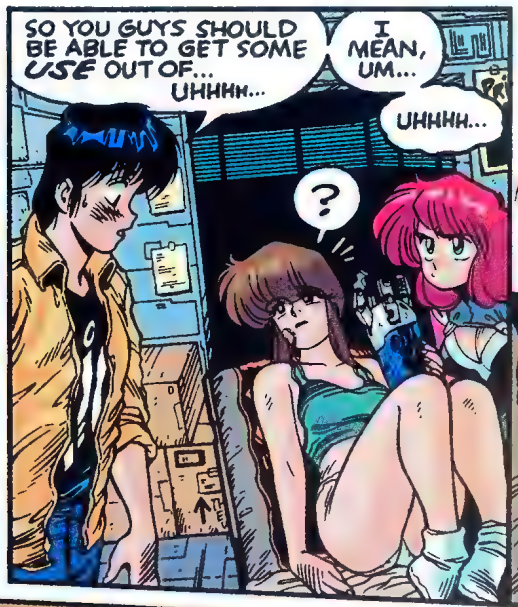

CAN'T... STAND IT... ANY LONGER...
...COME ON, YOU BASTARD...
...THE END IS NEAR.
AT LAST.
...KILL ME...
...KILL ME NOW...
THREE YEARS AGO, GENOM MESSILY INTERRUPTED MY ILL-FATED HEADHUNTING MISSION, FIRST BY DEPLOYING COMBAT BOOMERS...
...THEN BY NAILING MY TEAM WITH TRANSMISSIONS FROM A "PULSE WEAPON," AN ANTIPERSONNEL DEVICE THAT USES ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FIELDS TO DISRUPT HUMAN NEURAL ACTIVITY.
CONSPIRACY THEORISTS SAY THIS LITTLE TOY DATES BACK TO THE OLD SOVIET UNION. THAT'S SOMEWHAT IRONIC, GIVEN MY RUSSIAN ETHNIC HYPHEN...
I WAS THE ONLY ONE TO ESCAPE THE TOKYO AMBUSH UNSCATHED...
...OR SO I THOUGHT.
...SPRAY SOME GRAY...
EIGHT MONTHS AGO, I LEARNED OTHERWISE.
TURNED OUT THAT MY TEMPORAL LOBE WAS RIDDLED WITH THOUSANDS OF MICROLESIONS.
DAMNEDEST THING MY NEUROLOGIST HAD EVER SEEN.
SOME KEY WORDS USED IN HIS DIAGNOSIS WERE MALIGNANT, INOPERABLE, PROGRESSIVE, AND FATAL.
I WOULD SOON EXPERIENCE BLACK-OUTS, SEIZURES, UNCONTROLLABLE ATTACKS OF RAGE...
...OR, IN THE JARGON, "COMPLEX PARTIAL TEMPORAL LOBE SEIZURES..."
"...ACCOMPANIED BY EPISODIC DYSCONTROL." NICE PHRASE, THAT.

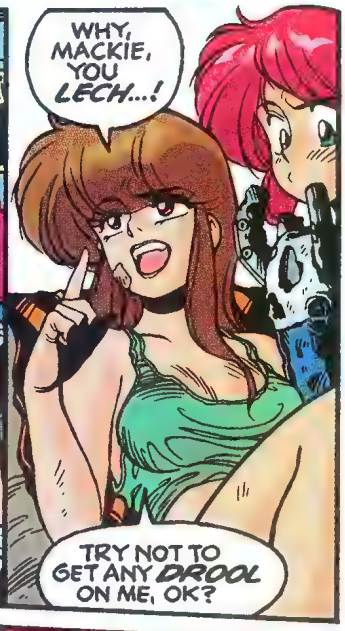

CUT TO: TWO WEEKS AGO TONIGHT, JUST AFTER MY EVENING DOSE OF ACETAZOLIMIDE AND CARBAMAZEPINE...
...A GENERIC EUROTRASH SUIT MATERIALIZES AT MY DOOR...
...LIKE A PARTICULARLY NASTY PHARMACEUTICAL SIDE EFFECT. THE SUIT SAYS HE HAILS FROM MY FORMER EUROPEAN EMPLOYERS...
...COME ON, DOCTOR JACK...
HE CLAIMS THAT MY OLD MISSION IS STILL VIABLE.
MY MECHANICAL PARTNER, THE SKORPION 19, IS STILL AT LARGE IN MEGATOKYO.
HIS SUPERIORS ARE AWARE OF MY SADLY WORSENING CONDITION...
BOARDING PASS
...PERHAPS, IF I WERE TO COMPLETE MY THREE-YEAR-OLD ASSIGNMENT...
...THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP ME OUT.
DANGLE THAT SLENDER THREAD OF HOPE, EUROWEASEL.
BUT, OF COURSE I KNOW THAT THE EUROPEANS ARE NO LONGER IN ANY CONDITION TO CONTEMPLETE SUCH A BOLD MOVE.
...DO ME...
NO, THIS SUIT IS REALLY FROM GENOM. AND GENOM, IT WOULD SEEM, DOESN'T LIKE LOOSE ENDS...
...SUCH AS HAVING ELEMENTS OF A CORPORATE EXTRACTION TEAM STALKING ABOUT ON ITS HOME TURF.
BUH KOOM
NO, GENOM WOULD PREFER A NICE, SOLID RESOLUTION TO THE MATTER...


--HOW DO I FEEL?
I FEEL LIKE CRAP. NENE, WHAT DO YOU THINK—
OUCH!
DON'T SIT ON MY LEG, DAMN IT!
WOW, CHECK THIS THING OUT...!
KEEPING A SOUVENIR OF YOUR GALLING DEFEAT, HUH, PRISS?
JEEZ... GETTING NAILED WITH A FEW HUNDRED ROUNDS OF MINIGUN FIRE...
...EVEN WITH A HARDSUIT ON, THAT'S GOTTA STING...!
WATCH WHERE YOU POINT THAT!
SYLIA SAID THE BEAM CANNON MIGHT BE STILL FUNCTIONAL...
PRISS
Y'KNOW WHAT THEY SAY...
HMN... "NEUROPHAGE ASSIMILATION"...
...WHAT DOESN'T KILL YOU...
..."NEURAL RECONFIGURATION TO ENABLE IMPROVED PATTERN RECOGNITION"...
..."GENOM'S USAGE OF NEUROLOGICALLY ENHANCED INTELLECTS"...
...MAKES YOU EVEN MORE EMBITTERED AND RESENTFUL...
THAT'D BE LIKE GETTING HIT BY A BASEBALL BAT OVER EVERY INCH OF YOUR BODY...!
NAHH...
...IT'D BE MORE LIKE GETTING HIT BY A POOL CUE, I'D SAY...

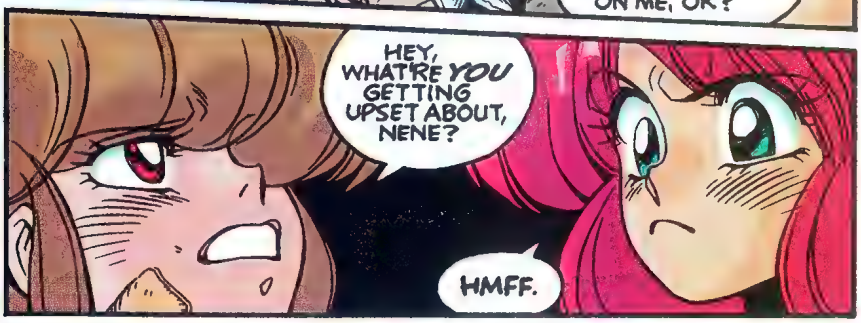
I'M IMPRESSED...
...THEY ACTUALLY OBTAINED COPIES OF FATHER'S PROTESTS TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD...!
HEY, SIS...
...I'VE FINISHED THE REPAIRS ON THE MOTOSLAVE, OR MOTOROID, WHATEVER...
FATAL BUT NOT SERIOUS
DPS

...IT'S STILL IN BAD SHAPE BUT IT SHOULD HOLD TOGETHER FOR A LITTLE WHILE...

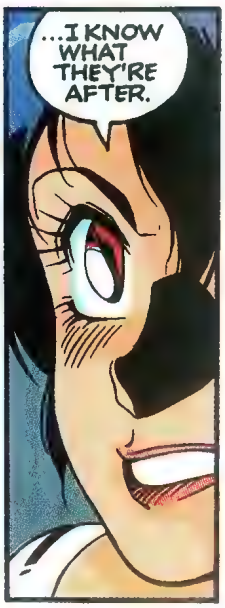

SO YOU GUYS SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET SOME USE OUT OF...
UHHHH...
I MEAN, UM...
UHHHH...
?

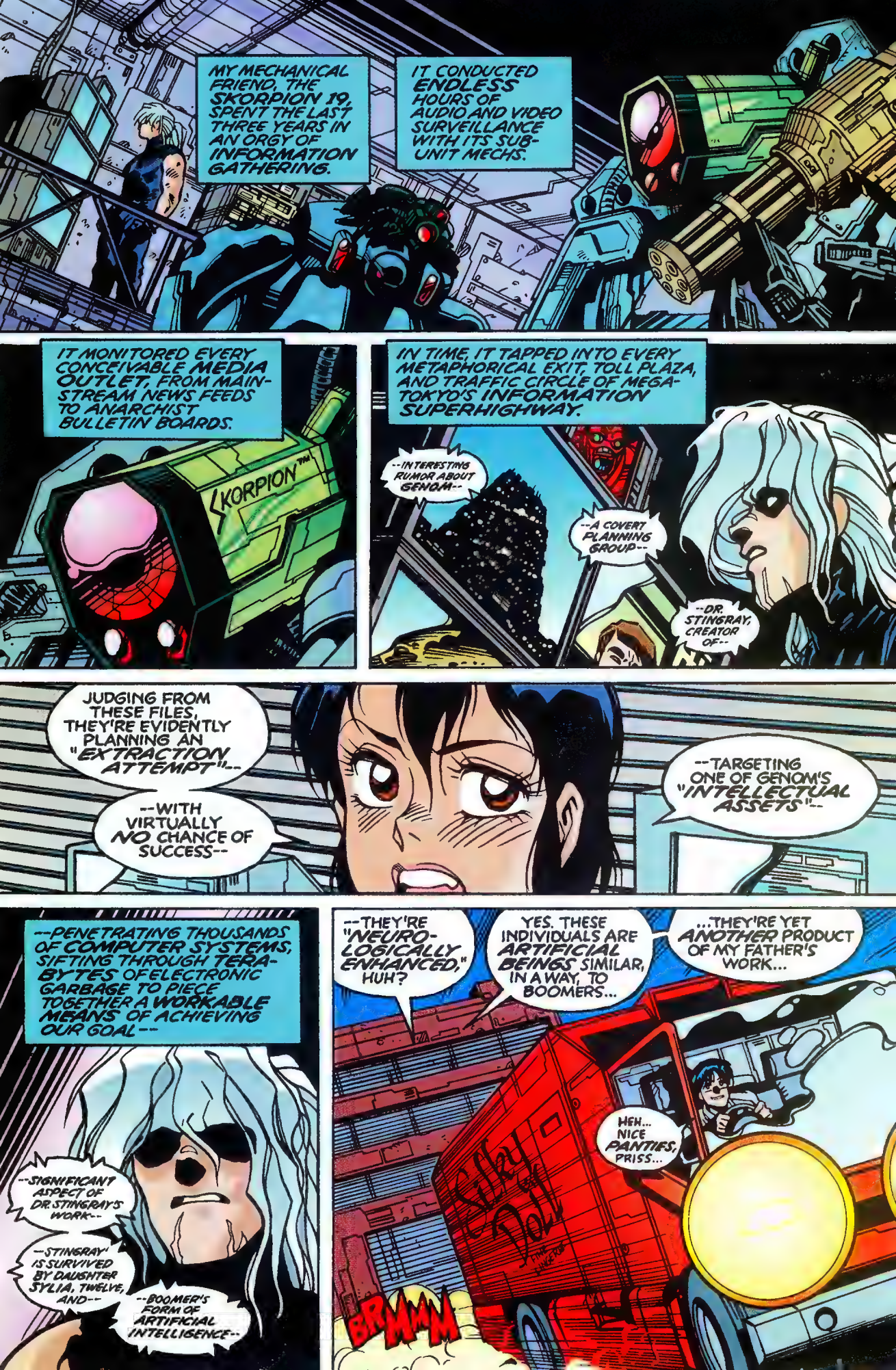

WHY, MACKIE, YOU LECH...!
TRY NOT TO GET ANY DROOL ON ME, OK?

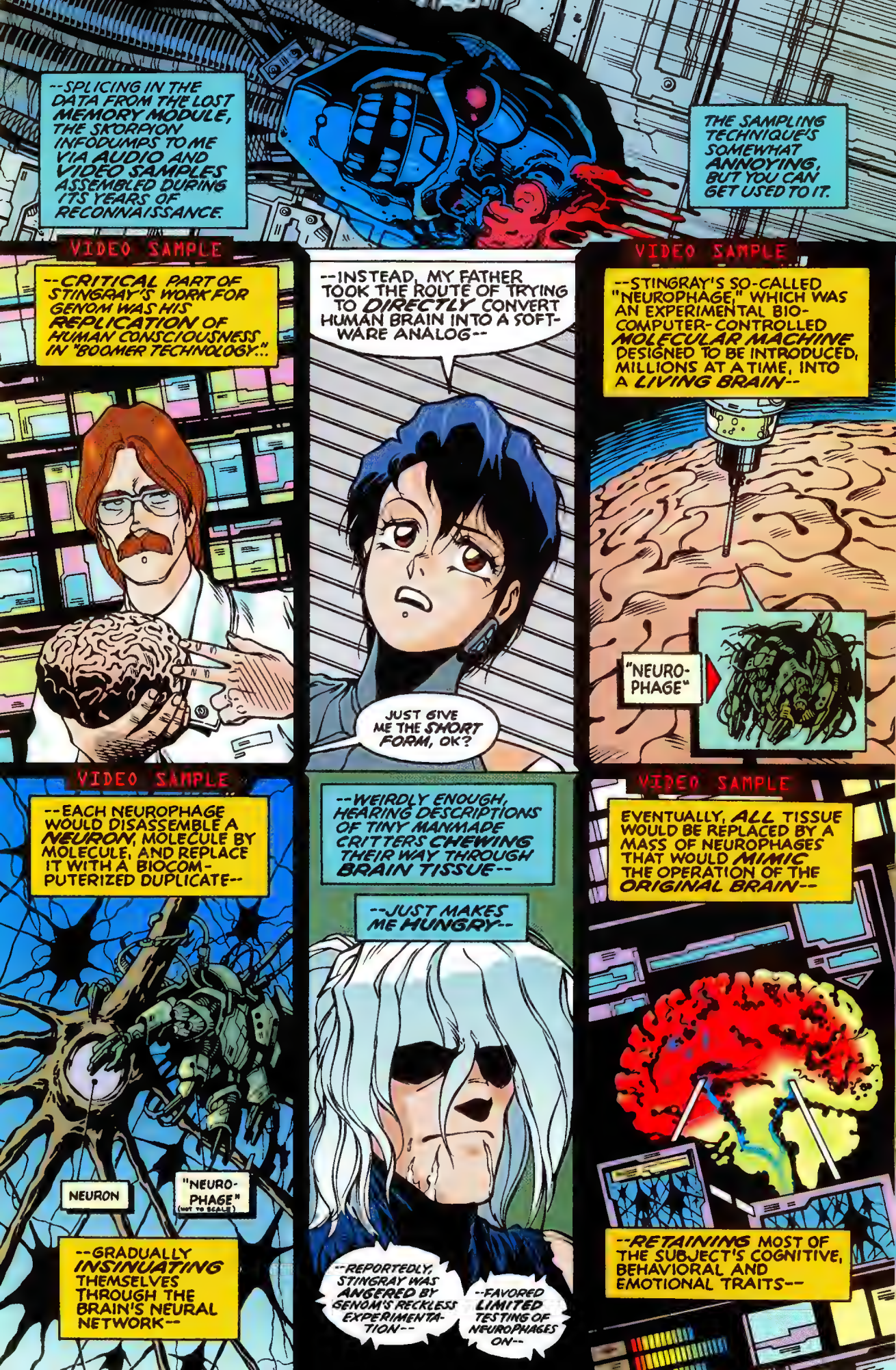
PRISS--!
WHAAAT?
UH, BE BACK IN A LITTLE WHILE--
--GOTTA GO FUEL UP THE TRUCK--
RIO

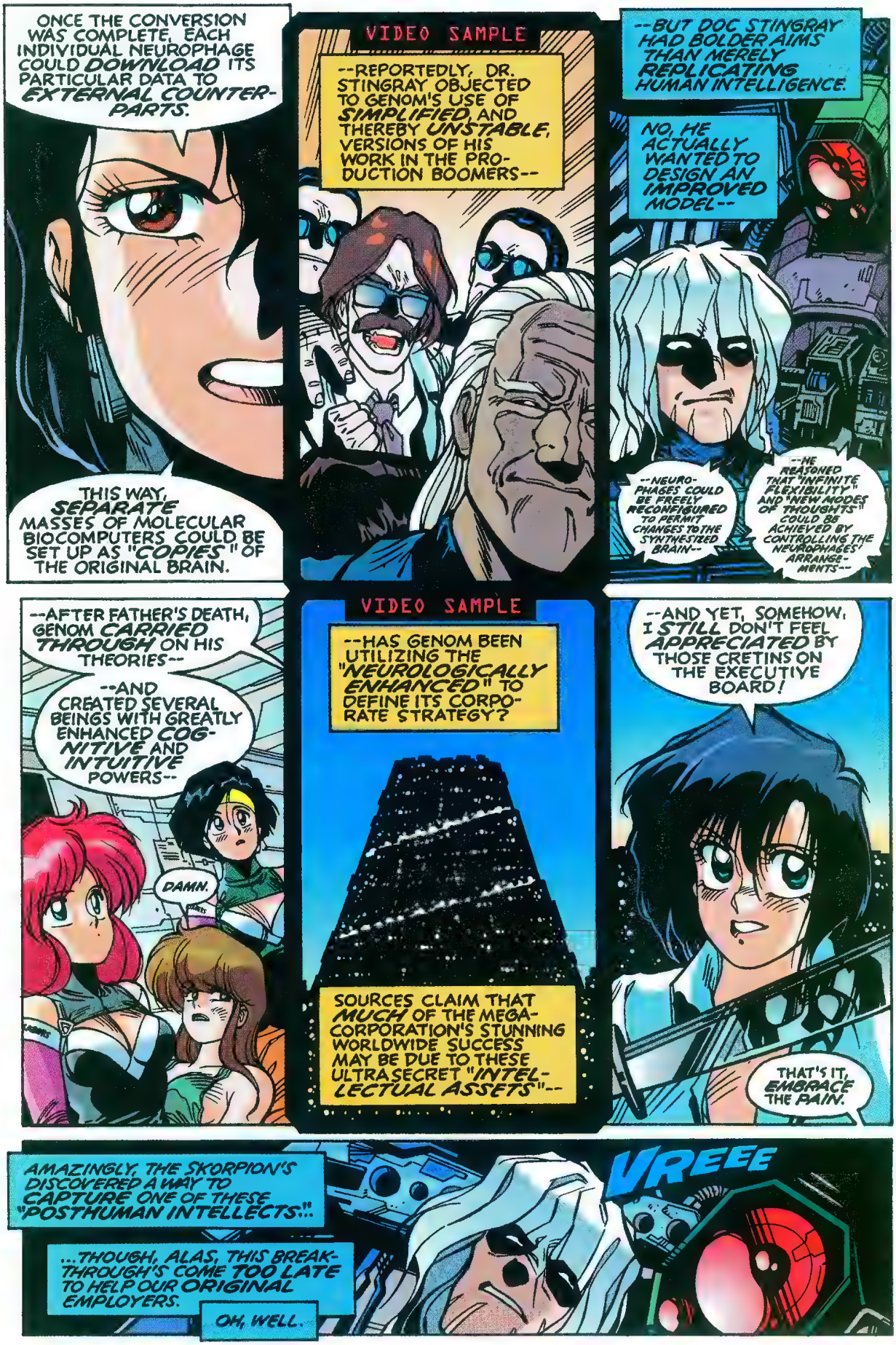

HEY, WHAT'RE YOU GETTING UPSET ABOUT, NENE?
HMFF.

GOOD WORK, NENE.
THESE DECRYPTED FILES MAKE IT CLEAR EXACTLY WHAT THESE MECHS ARE DOING IN MEGATOKYO.
AS INSANE AN OBJECTIVE AS IT MAY BE...
UM, GLAD TO BE OF SERVICE, SYLIA...
...FOR ONCE...


...I KNOW WHAT THEY'RE AFTER.

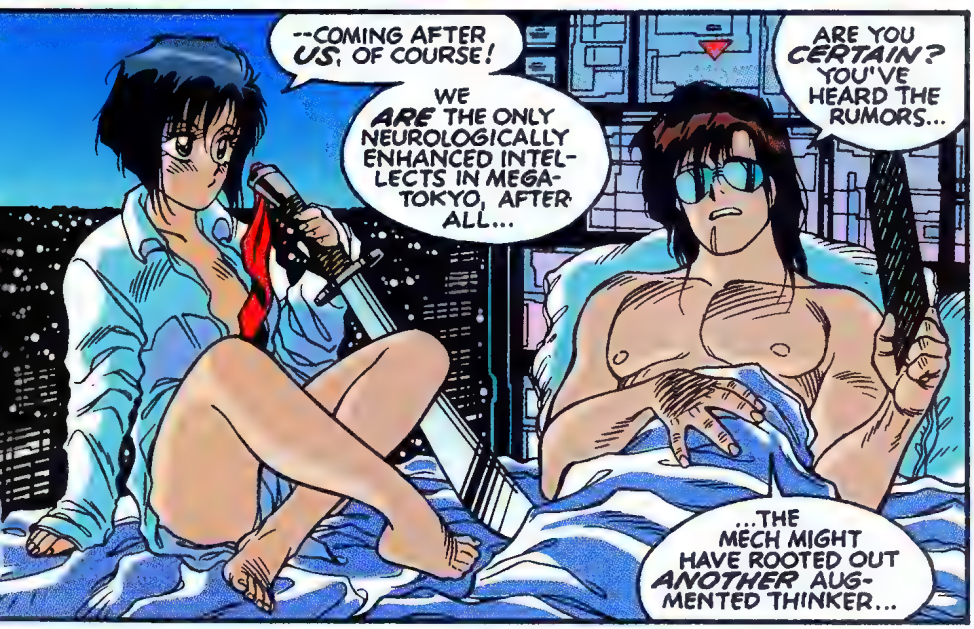

MY MECHANICAL FRIEND, THE SKORPION 19, SPENT THE LAST THREE YEARS IN AN ORGY OF INFORMATION GATHERING.
IT CONDUCTED ENDLESS HOURS OF AUDIO AND VIDEO SURVEILLANCE WITH ITS SUB-UNIT MECHS.
IT MONITORED EVERY CONCEIVABLE MEDIA OUTLET, FROM MAINSTREAM NEWS FEEDS TO ANARCHIST BULLETIN BOARDS.
SKORPION™
IN TIME, IT TAPPED INTO EVERY METAPHORICAL EXIT, TOLL PLAZA, AND TRAFFIC CIRCLE OF MEGA-TOKYO'S INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY.
--INTERESTING RUMOR ABOUT GENOM--
--A COVERT PLANNING GROUP--
--DR. STINGRAY, CREATOR OF--
JUDGING FROM THESE FILES, THEY'RE EVIDENTLY PLANNING AN "EXTRACTION ATTEMPT"--
--WITH VIRTUALLY NO CHANCE OF SUCCESS--
--TARGETING ONE OF GENOM'S "INTELLECTUAL ASSETS"--
--PENETRATING THOUSANDS OF COMPUTER SYSTEMS, SIFTING THROUGH TERABYTES OF ELECTRONIC GARBAGE TO PIECE TOGETHER A WORKABLE MEANS OF ACHIEVING OUR GOAL--
--SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF DR. STINGRAY'S WORK--
--STINGRAY IS SURVIVED BY DAUGHTER SYLIA, TWELVE, AND--
--BOOMER'S FORM OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE--
--THEY'RE "NEUROLOGICALLY ENHANCED," HUH?
YES. THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE ARTIFICIAL BEINGS SIMILAR, IN A WAY, TO BOOMERS...
...THEY'RE YET ANOTHER PRODUCT OF MY FATHER'S WORK...
HEH... NICE PANTIES, PRISS...
BRMMM

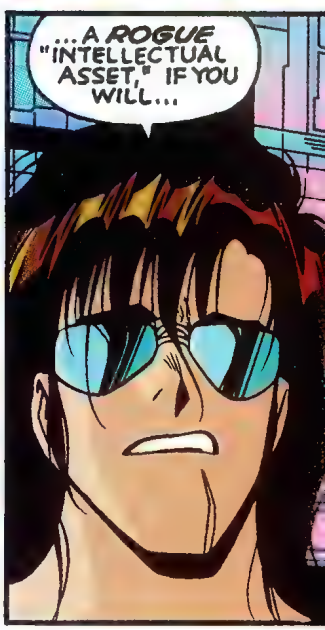

--SPLICING IN THE DATA FROM THE LOST MEMORY MODULE, THE SKORPION INFODUMPS TO ME VIA AUDIO AND VIDEO SAMPLES ASSEMBLED DURING ITS YEARS OF RECONNAISSANCE.
THE SAMPLING TECHNIQUE'S SOMEWHAT ANNOYING, BUT YOU CAN GET USED TO IT.
VIDEO SAMPLE
--CRITICAL PART OF STINGRAY'S WORK FOR GENOM WAS HIS REPLICATION OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN "BOOMER TECHNOLOGY"..
--INSTEAD, MY FATHER TOOK THE ROUTE OF TRYING TO DIRECTLY CONVERT HUMAN BRAIN INTO A SOFTWARE ANALOG--
JUST GIVE ME THE SHORT FORM, OK?
VIDEO SAMPLE
--STINGRAY'S SO-CALLED "NEUROPHAGE," WHICH WAS AN EXPERIMENTAL BIO-COMPUTER-CONTROLLED MOLECULAR MACHINE DESIGNED TO BE INTRODUCED, MILLIONS AT A TIME, INTO A LIVING BRAIN--
"NEURO-PHAGE"
VIDEO SAMPLE
--EACH NEUROPHAGE WOULD DISASSEMBLE A NEURON, MOLECULE BY MOLECULE, AND REPLACE IT WITH A BIOCOMPUTERIZED DUPLICATE--
NEURON
"NEURO-PHAGE" (NOT TO SCALE)
--GRADUALLY INSINUATING THEMSELVES THROUGH THE BRAIN'S NEURAL NETWORK--
--WEIRDLY ENOUGH, HEARING DESCRIPTIONS OF TINY MANMADE CRITTERS CHEWING THEIR WAY THROUGH BRAIN TISSUE--
--JUST MAKES ME HUNGRY--
--REPORTEDLY, STINGRAY WAS ANGERED BY GENOM'S RECKLESS EXPERIMENTATION--
--FAVORED LIMITED TESTING OF NEUROPHAGES ON--
VIDEO SAMPLE
EVENTUALLY, ALL TISSUE WOULD BE REPLACED BY A MASS OF NEUROPHAGES THAT WOULD MIMIC THE OPERATION OF THE ORIGINAL BRAIN--
--RETAINING MOST OF THE SUBJECT'S COGNITIVE, BEHAVIORAL AND EMOTIONAL TRAITS--


ONCE THE CONVERSION WAS COMPLETE, EACH INDIVIDUAL NEUROPHAGE COULD DOWNLOAD ITS PARTICULAR DATA TO EXTERNAL COUNTERPARTS.
THIS WAY, SEPARATE MASSES OF MOLECULAR BIOCOMPUTERS COULD BE SET UP AS "COPIES" OF THE ORIGINAL BRAIN.
VIDEO SAMPLE
--REPORTEDLY, DR. STINGRAY OBJECTED TO GENOM'S USE OF SIMPLIFIED, AND THEREBY UNSTABLE, VERSIONS OF HIS WORK IN THE PRODUCTION BOOMERS--
--BUT DOC STINGRAY HAD BOLDER AIMS THAN MERELY REPLICATING HUMAN INTELLIGENCE.
NO, HE ACTUALLY WANTED TO DESIGN AN IMPROVED MODEL--
--NEUROPHAGES COULD BE FREELY RECONFIGURED TO PERMIT CHANGES TO THE SYNTHESIZED BRAIN--
--HE REASONED THAT "INFINITE FLEXIBILITY" AND "NEW MODES OF THOUGHTS" COULD BE ACHIEVED BY CONTROLLING THE NEUROPHAGES' ARRANGEMENTS--
--AFTER FATHER'S DEATH, GENOM CARRIED THROUGH ON HIS THEORIES--
--AND CREATED SEVERAL BEINGS WITH GREATLY ENHANCED COGNITIVE AND INTUITIVE POWERS--
DAMN.
VIDEO SAMPLE
--HAS GENOM BEEN UTILIZING THE "NEUROLOGICALLY ENHANCED" TO DEFINE ITS CORPORATE STRATEGY?
SOURCES CLAIM THAT MUCH OF THE MEGA-CORPORATION'S STUNNING WORLDWIDE SUCCESS MAY BE DUE TO THESE ULTRA SECRET "INTELLECTUAL ASSETS"--
--AND YET, SOMEHOW, I STILL DON'T FEEL APPRECIATED BY THOSE CRETINS ON THE EXECUTIVE BOARD!
THAT'S IT, EMBRACE THE PAIN.
AMAZINGLY, THE SKORPION'S DISCOVERED A WAY TO CAPTURE ONE OF THESE "POSTHUMAN INTELLECTS"!!
...THOUGH, ALAS, THIS BREAKTHROUGH'S COME TOO LATE TO HELP OUR ORIGINAL EMPLOYERS.
OH, WELL.
VREEE

IT'S SENSELESS IDIOCY TO CONTINUE WITH THIS MISSION, I KNOW.
BUT AS FUTILE, MEANINGLESS, AND EVEN SUICIDAL AS IT HAPPENS TO BE...

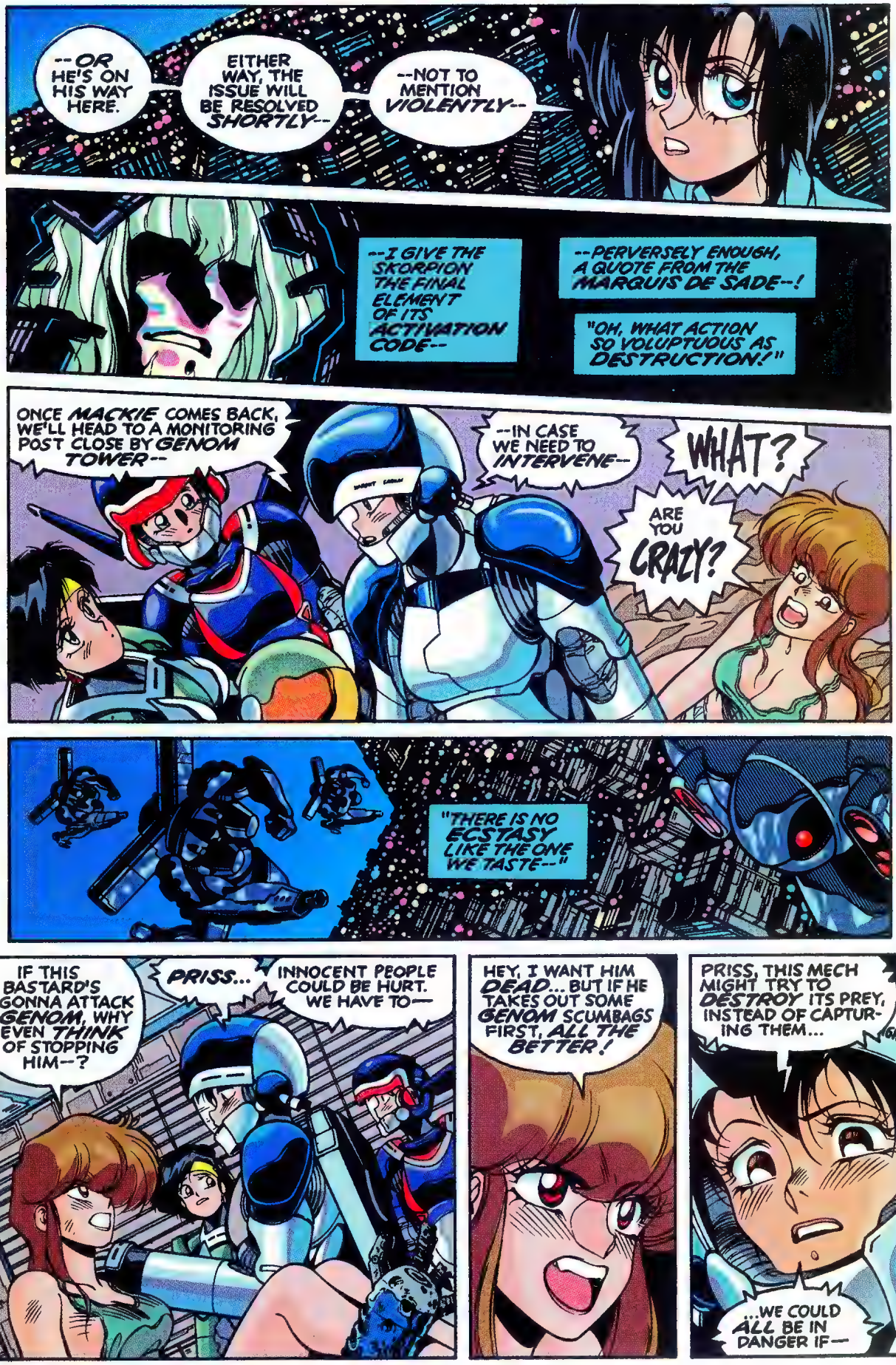
...THIS IS MY JOB.


--COMING AFTER US, OF COURSE!
WE ARE THE ONLY NEUROLOGICALLY ENHANCED INTELLECTS IN MEGA-TOKYO, AFTER ALL...
ARE YOU CERTAIN? YOU'VE HEARD THE RUMORS...
...THE MECH MIGHT HAVE ROOTED OUT ANOTHER AUGMENTED THINKER...

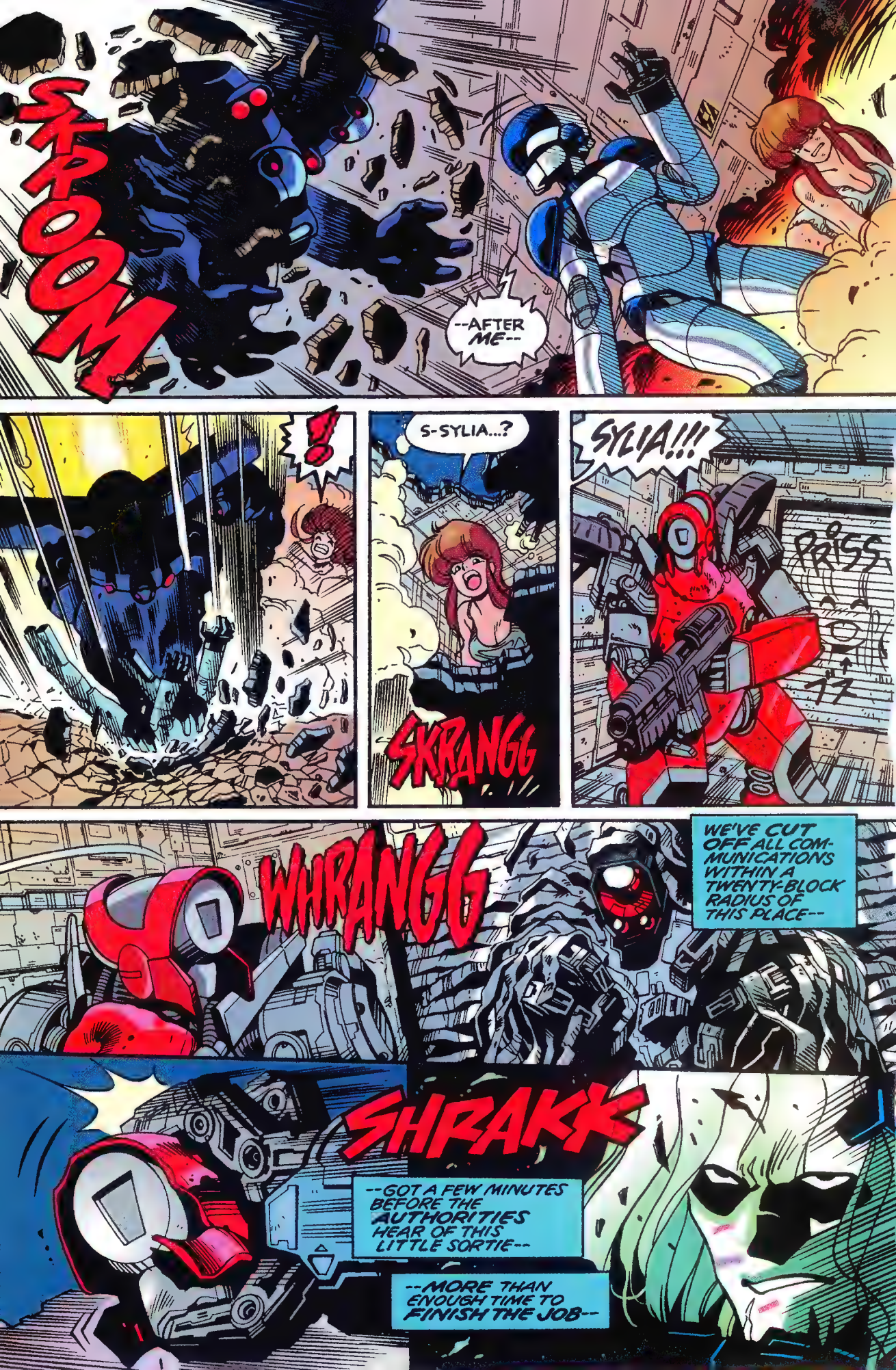

...A ROGUE "INTELLECTUAL ASSET," IF YOU WILL...

--WITH AN ATTACK ON GENOM TOWER IMMINENT, YOUR HARDSUIT'S SENSOR SUITES AND SURVEILLANCE GEAR WILL BE CRITICAL, NENE.
AFTER LAST NIGHT, ARE YOU FEELING UP TO THIS...?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, SYLIA!

I'M READY FOR ANYTHING!
EXCEPT A FIGHT, MAYBE...
HUSH, LINNA.


--OR HE'S ON HIS WAY HERE.
EITHER WAY, THE ISSUE WILL BE RESOLVED SHORTLY--
--NOT TO MENTION VIOLENTLY--
--I GIVE THE SKORPION THE FINAL ELEMENT OF ITS ACTIVATION CODE--
--PERVERSELY ENOUGH, A QUOTE FROM THE MARQUIS DE SADE--!
"OH, WHAT ACTION SO VOLUPTUOUS AS DESTRUCTION!"
ONCE MACKIE COMES BACK, WE'LL HEAD TO A MONITORING POST CLOSE BY GENOM TOWER--
--IN CASE WE NEED TO INTERVENE--
WHAT?
ARE YOU CRAZY?
"THERE IS NO ECSTASY LIKE THE ONE WE TASTE--"
IF THIS BASTARD'S GONNA ATTACK GENOM, WHY EVEN THINK OF STOPPING HIM--?
PRISS...
INNOCENT PEOPLE COULD BE HURT. WE HAVE TO—
HEY, I WANT HIM DEAD... BUT IF HE TAKES OUT SOME GENOM SCUMBAGS FIRST, ALL THE BETTER!
PRISS, THIS MECH MIGHT TRY TO DESTROY ITS PREY, INSTEAD OF CAPTURING THEM...
...WE COULD ALL BE IN DANGER IF—

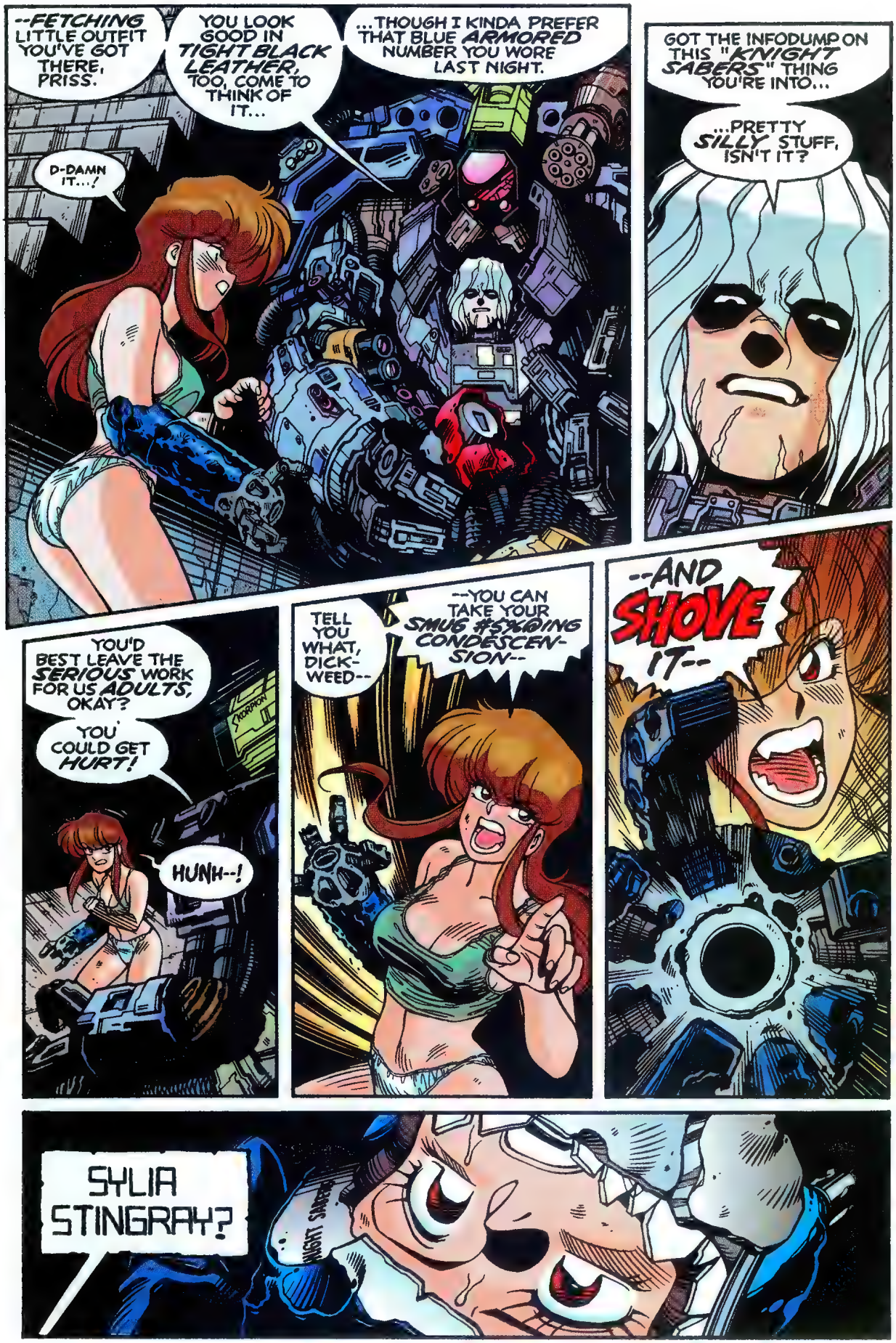
"WHEN WE GIVE OURSELVES OVER TO THIS DIVINE INFAMY!"
CHOOM CHOOM
WHKROOM
KNIGHT
RMBLL
:KOFF:
W-WHAT THE HELL--?!
OWWW--!
MY LEGS-- I'M PINNED--
SHREE
--SOMEBODY HELP ME--
--HOLD ON, NENE--
THEY'VE COME AFTER US--


SKROOM
--AFTER ME--
S-SYLIA...?
SKRANGG
SYLIA!!!
PRISS
WHRANGG
WE'VE CUT OFF ALL COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN A TWENTY-BLOCK RADIUS OF THIS PLACE--
SHRAKK
--GOT A FEW MINUTES BEFORE THE AUTHORITIES HEAR OF THIS LITTLE SORTIE--
--MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME TO FINISH THE JOB--

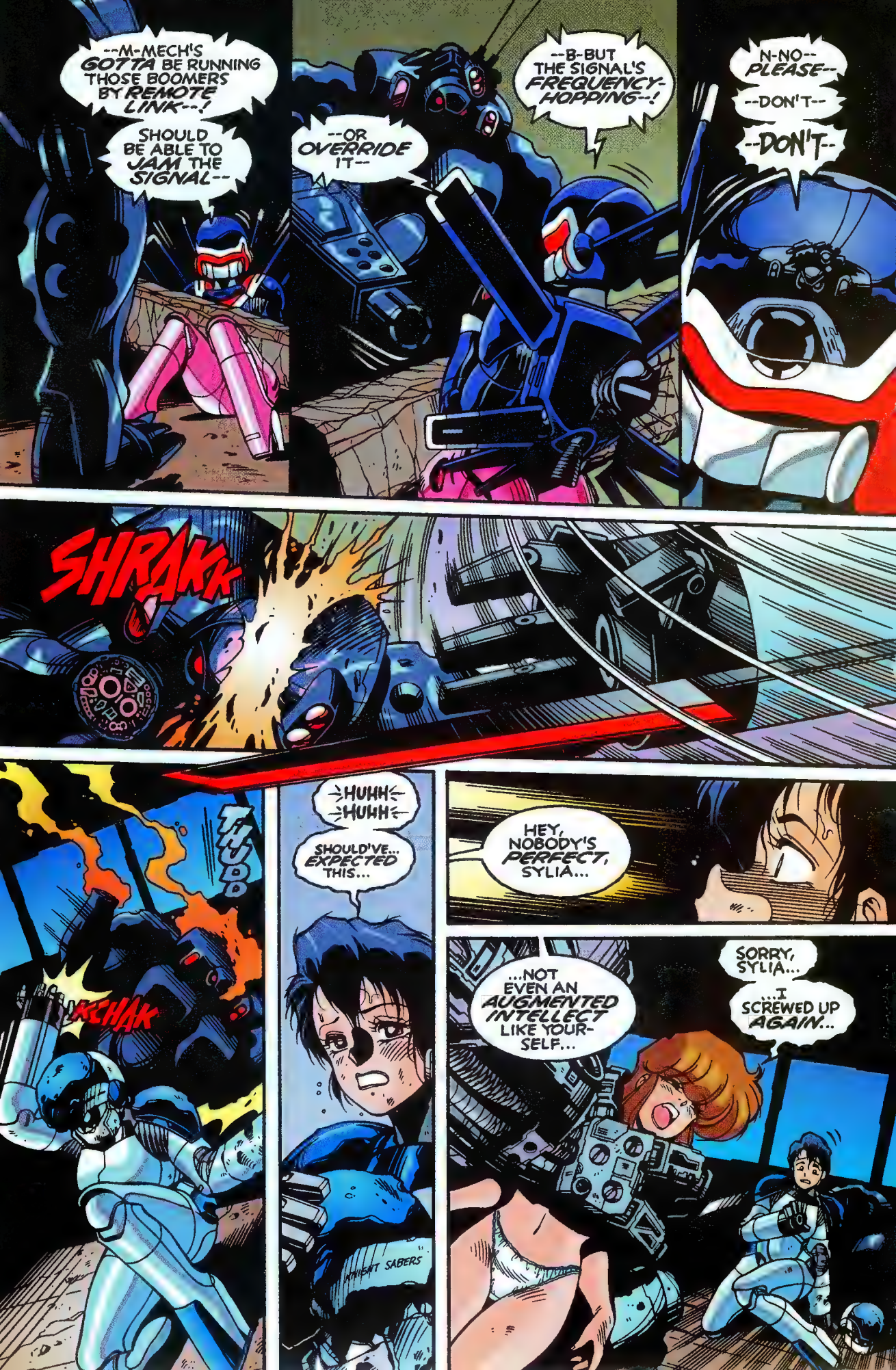
GET IT OFF ME, LINNA--!
--I'M TRYING--!
KOFF
ONE SHOT LEFT--
--MAYBE--
PRISS!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING--?!!
LINNA...!
--GOTTA MAKE IT COUNT--!
IS SHE INSANE--?
HNNH!
OH, NO--!
?!!
UNNHH

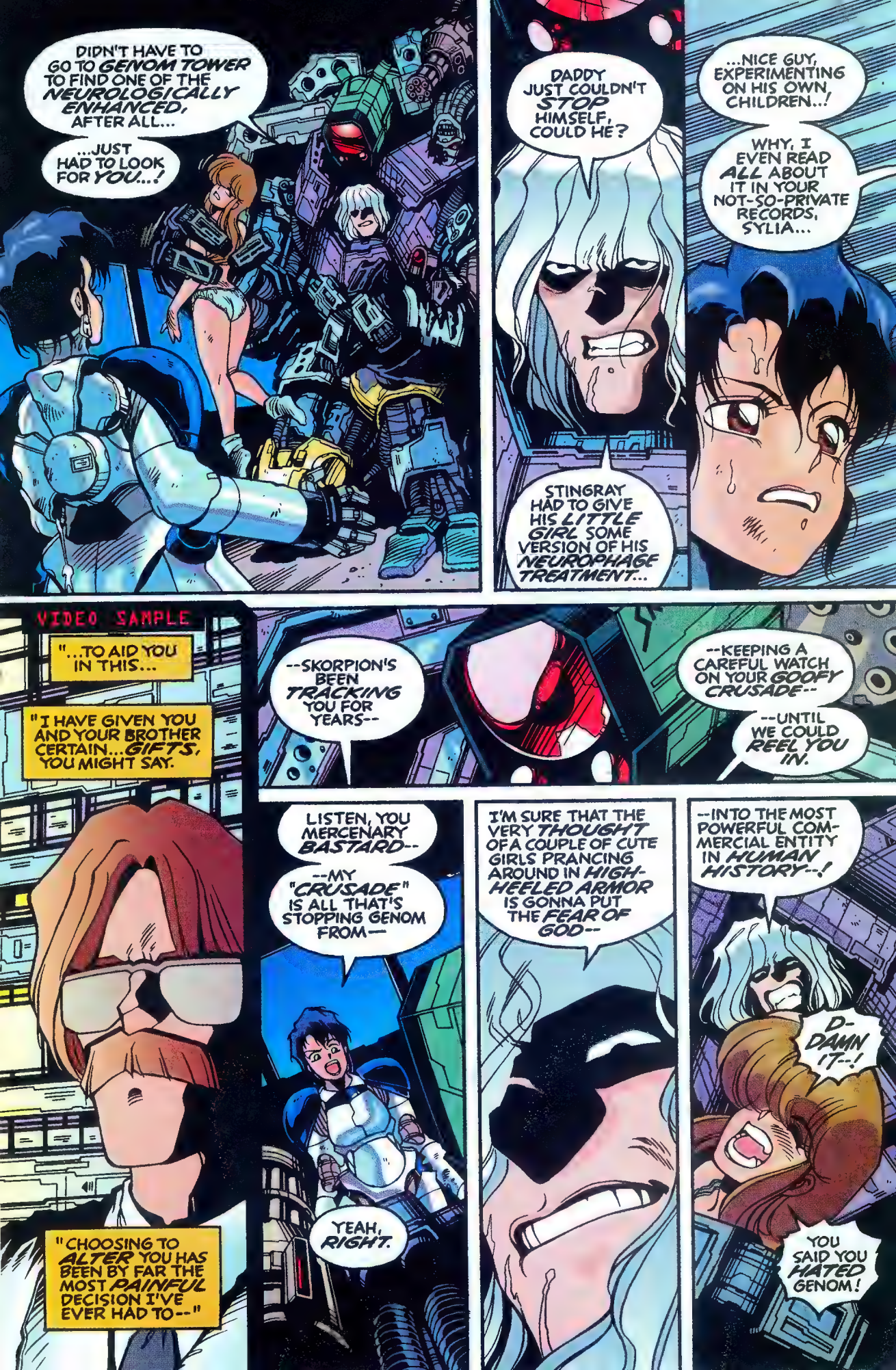
AAAAAAAA
AAA
SYLIA!
SHRAK
KSHANG
SYLIA!
KSHANG
YO, PRISS.
CHOOM

WHSHH
SHIIIINGG
ALL RIGHT, LINNA!
EVERYTHING I'VE EVER SAID ABOUT YOU--
--I TAKE IT ALL BACK--!
CHOOM


--FETCHING LITTLE OUTFIT YOU'VE GOT THERE, PRISS.
YOU LOOK GOOD IN TIGHT BLACK LEATHER, TOO, COME TO THINK OF IT...
...THOUGH I KINDA PREFER THAT BLUE ARMORED NUMBER YOU WORE LAST NIGHT.
D-DAMN IT...!
GOT THE INFODUMP ON THIS "KNIGHT SABERS" THING YOU'RE INTO...
...PRETTY SILLY STUFF, ISN'T IT?
YOU'D BEST LEAVE THE SERIOUS WORK FOR US ADULTS, OKAY?
YOU COULD GET HURT!
HUNH--!
TELL YOU WHAT, DICK-WEED--
--YOU CAN TAKE YOUR SMUG #$%@ING CONDESCEN-SION--
--AND SHOVE IT--
SYLIA STINGRAY?

SYLIA STINGRAY!
SYLIA STINGRAY!!
STINGRAY!!!
CHAK
KNIGHT SABERS
SHKK

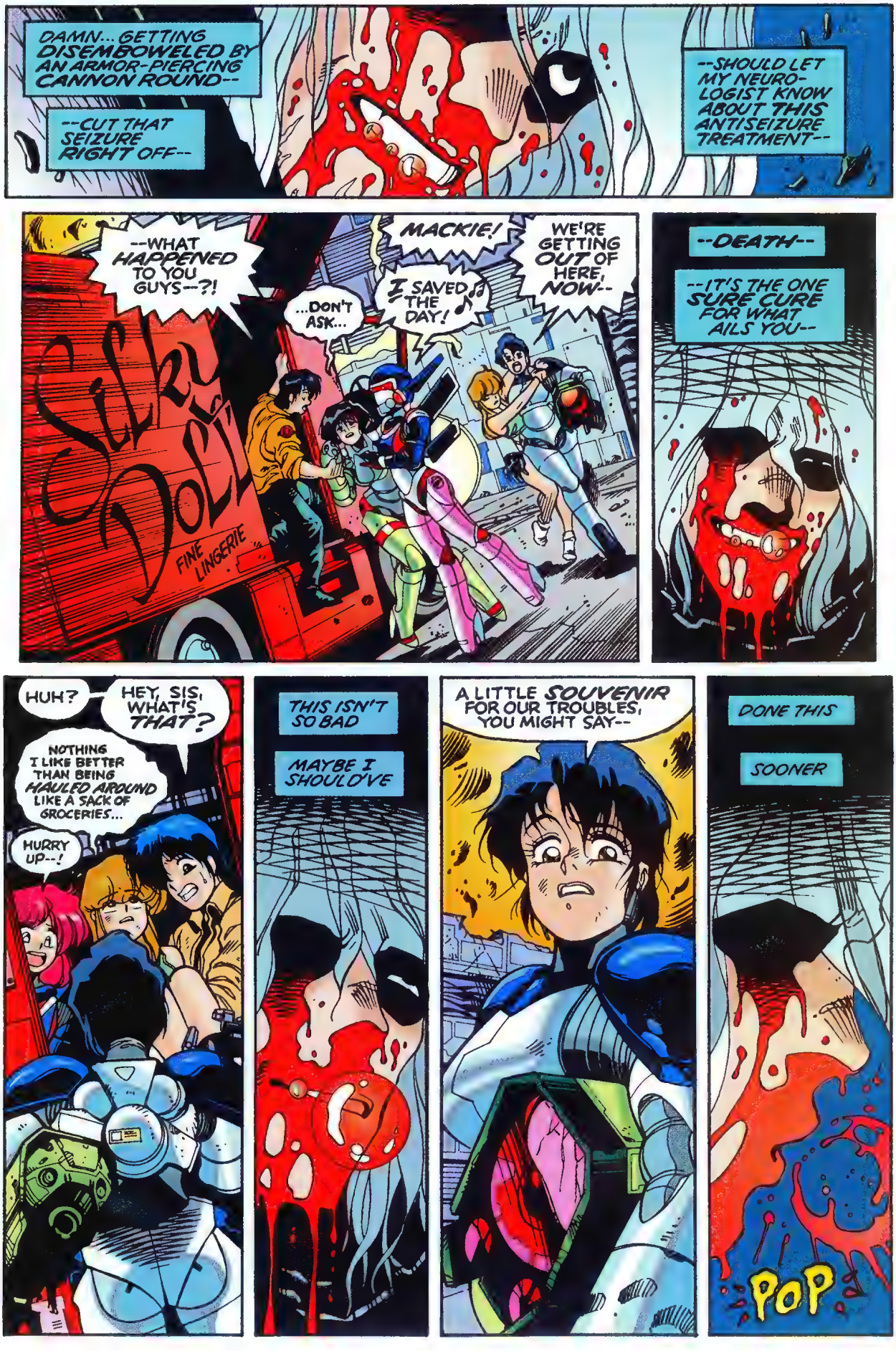

--M-MECH'S GOTTA BE RUNNING THOSE BOOMERS BY REMOTE LINK--!
SHOULD BE ABLE TO JAM THE SIGNAL--
--OR OVERRIDE IT--
--B-BUT THE SIGNAL'S FREQUENCY-HOPPING--!
N-NO-- PLEASE--
--DON'T--
--DON'T--
SHRAKK
THUDD
KCHAK
HUHH HUHH
SHOULD'VE... EXPECTED THIS...
LIGHT SABERS
HEY, NOBODY'S PERFECT, SYLIA...
...NOT EVEN AN AUGMENTED INTELLECT LIKE YOURSELF...
SORRY, SYLIA...
...I SCREWED UP AGAIN...


DIDN'T HAVE TO GO TO GENOM TOWER TO FIND ONE OF THE NEUROLOGICALLY ENHANCED, AFTER ALL...
...JUST HAD TO LOOK FOR YOU...!
DADDY JUST COULDN'T STOP HIMSELF, COULD HE?
STINGRAY HAD TO GIVE HIS LITTLE GIRL SOME VERSION OF HIS NEUROPHAGE TREATMENT...
...NICE GUY, EXPERIMENTING ON HIS OWN CHILDREN..!
WHY, I EVEN READ ALL ABOUT IT IN YOUR NOT-SO-PRIVATE RECORDS, SYLIA...
VIDEO SAMPLE
"...TO AID YOU IN THIS...
"I HAVE GIVEN YOU AND YOUR BROTHER CERTAIN...GIFTS, YOU MIGHT SAY.
"CHOOSING TO ALTER YOU HAS BEEN BY FAR THE MOST PAINFUL DECISION I'VE EVER HAD TO--"
--SKORPION'S BEEN TRACKING YOU FOR YEARS--
--KEEPING A CAREFUL WATCH ON YOUR GOOFY CRUSADE--
--UNTIL WE COULD REEL YOU IN.
LISTEN, YOU MERCENARY BASTARD--
--MY "CRUSADE" IS ALL THAT'S STOPPING GENOM FROM—
YEAH, RIGHT.
I'M SURE THAT THE VERY THOUGHT OF A COUPLE OF CUTE GIRLS PRANCING AROUND IN HIGH-HEELED ARMOR IS GONNA PUT THE FEAR OF GOD--
--INTO THE MOST POWERFUL COMMERCIAL ENTITY IN HUMAN HISTORY--!
D-DAMN IT--!
YOU SAID YOU HATED GENOM!

WHY ARE YOU ATTACKING THE ONLY ONES FIGHTING THEM--?!
SHIT!
A HALLUCINATION--!
NO WARNING, THIS TIME--
--A MAJOR SEIZURE COMING ON--
--COMING ON FAST--
--FAST--
--GOING UNDER--
--DAMN IT--
GNNNGGH
NNUHH
NNGH
NNNGHH

CHOOM
DAMAGE!
CHOOM
DAMAGE!!
CHOOM
DAMAGE!!!
CHOOM
CHOOM CHOOM
OH, YEAH!
I'M NO GOOD IN A FIGHT, HUH?
...YOU'RE THE MAN, NENE...

HUKK
WORD TO...THE WISE, GIRLS...
...THE SKORPION'S... FINISHED...
...BUT IT'S... PROGRAMMED... TO SPOIL-SPORT...
GUCHK
KOFF
...WIRED TO... SELF-DESTRUCT...
...SPECTACU-LARLY...
...SO... HKK
...UNLESS... YOU'D CARE... TO ACCOMPANY ME... TO HELL...
UM, SYLIA...?
FROM WHAT MY SENSORS ARE PICKING UP, HE'S NOT KIDDING...!
...YOU'D BEST... GET THE FLOCK... OUT OF HERE...
OH, MAN--!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS!
LEAVE 'EM ALONE FOR TEN MINUTES--
--AND JUST SEE WHAT HAPPENS--!


DAMN... GETTING DISEMBOWELED BY AN ARMOR-PIERCING CANNON ROUND--
--CUT THAT SEIZURE RIGHT OFF--
--SHOULD LET MY NEURO-LOGIST KNOW ABOUT THIS ANTISEIZURE TREATMENT--
--WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU GUYS--?!
...DON'T ASK...
MACKIE!
I SAVED THE DAY!
WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE, NOW--
Silk Doll
FINE LINGERIE
--DEATH--
--IT'S THE ONE SURE CURE FOR WHAT AILS YOU--
HUH?
HEY, SIS, WHAT'S THAT?
NOTHING I LIKE BETTER THAN BEING HAULED AROUND LIKE A SACK OF GROCERIES...
HURRY UP--!
THIS ISN'T SO BAD
MAYBE I SHOULD'VE
A LITTLE SOUVENIR FOR OUR TROUBLES, YOU MIGHT SAY--
DONE THIS
SOONER
POP

JEEZ, SYLIA...
...I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR, UM, BUILDING...!
YEAH...
...SORRY 'BOUT THAT...
IT'S JUST ONE OF MY PROPERTIES...
...I'LL SURVIVE THE LOSS.
WELL, MR. "WHITE KNIGHT"!
...REST IN PEACE...
...OR REST IN PIECES... AS THE CASE MAY BE...
AT LEAST THERE WON'T BE ANYTHING LEFT TO INTEREST THE ADPOLICE...
...AND SOME OF THE DATA FROM THIS SKORPION'S FILES MIGHT BE OF VALUE...
...SO SOME GOOD, HOWEVER LIMITED, MIGHT COME FROM ALL THIS...
POWER
KLIK
...WHATEVER...
THE END

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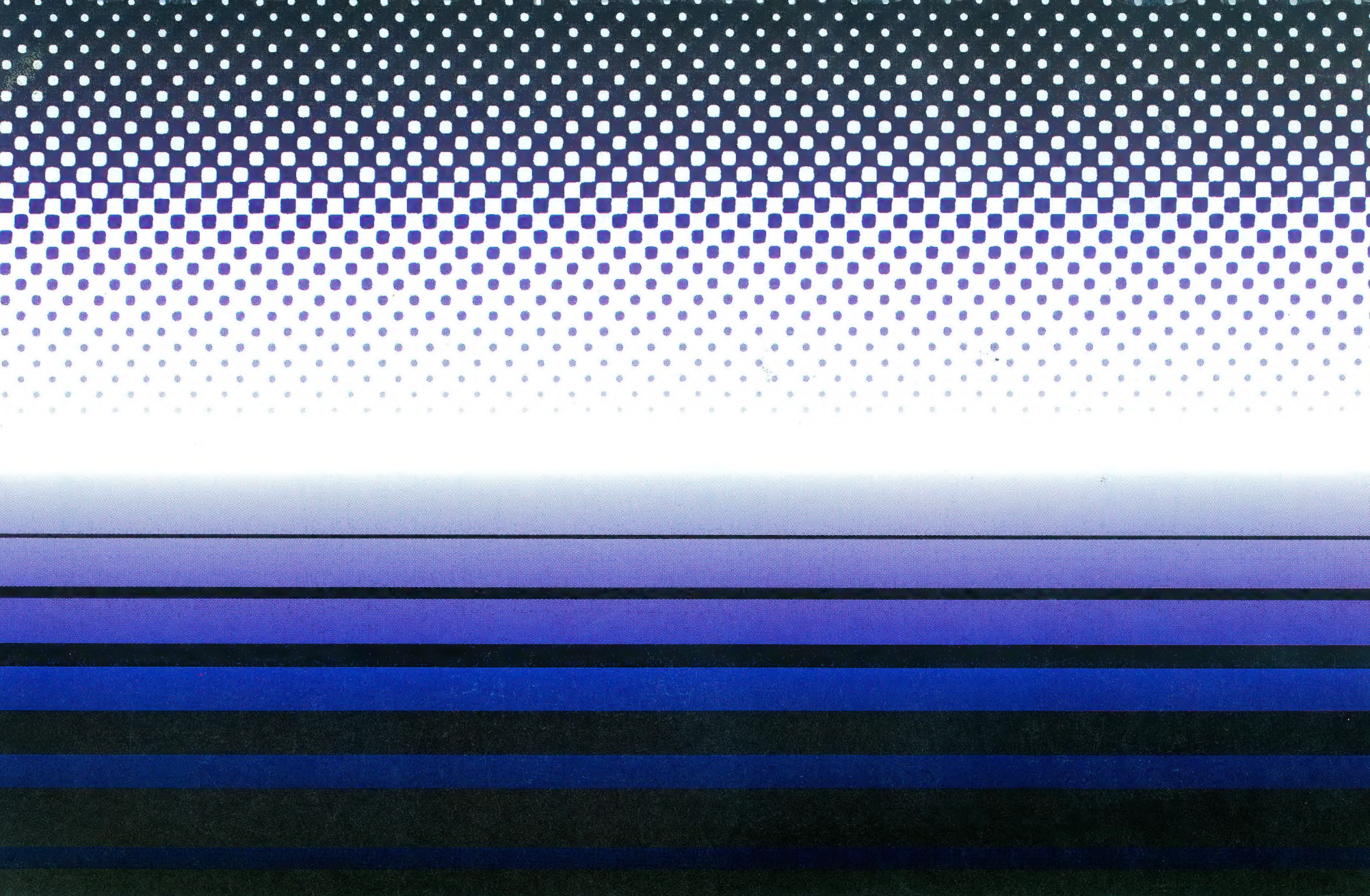

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